

# Children Missing from Home and Care Policy and Protocol



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## 1. Introduction

This Policy provides a local context to the Pan London Child Protection Procedures (Part B3) for Children Missing from Care and Home and should be read in used in conjunction with these:

[http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/ch\\_miss\\_care\\_home\\_sch.html#intro](http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/ch_miss_care_home_sch.html#intro)

Merton's Policy and corresponding multi-agency protocol for Safeguarding Children Missing from Care and Home is designed to support an effective collaborative safeguarding response from all agencies involved when a child goes missing. It aims to provide guidance for preventing and assessing the risk of the child going missing. The Protocol describes appropriate staff/agency actions to locate the child, to affect their return and to identify the issues which caused, and may continue to cause, the child to go missing. Additional information regarding current research findings including **push and pull factors** for missing young people are in Appendix 1.

**Please see the protocol flow cart at the end of the document (Appendix 7) as a quick reference guide for the processes contained within this policy.**

## 2. Principles

The following principles should be adopted by all agencies in relation to identifying and locating children who go missing:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount.
- Locating and returning the child to a safe environment is the main objective.
- Child Protection Procedures will be initiated whenever there are concerns that a child who is missing may be at risk of significant harm.
- Police will act on all missing notifications as defined by the parameters of the missing definition.
- The completion of a full Risk Assessment is paramount to guide collaborative working and sharing information with the police.
- Every '*missing*' child who returns will be interviewed by someone other than the direct carer.
- Where the child is known to Children's Social Care or meets the criteria for referral to Children's Social Care, the Local Authority will ensure that there is a range of service options to address the child's needs when they return.

## 3. Lead Persons Responsible

- Children's Social Care – Head of Service MASH
- Metropolitan Police – Superintendent for Safeguarding, Borough Command Unit
- Catch 22 – Service Manager

## 4. Definitions

The Police definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' are:

**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'.*

**Absent:** *A person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be'.*

The police classification of a person as 'absent' and 'missing' are based on continuous monitoring and risk assessment of the young person's situation.

### 4.1. Missing

All cases classified as "missing" by the Police will receive an active Police response, such as deployment of officers to locate a child or young person.

A child (under age of 18 years) will be considered missing until they are located and their well-being or otherwise is established.

Missing episodes that cause concern are those where:

- Staff or carers have no indication as to the child's whereabouts and/or
- There is no indication that the child is likely to return within a reasonable period of time and
- There is immediate concern for the child's safety.

There may be circumstances when a child who goes missing from care is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm. This includes children subjected to fabricated or induced illness, female genital mutilation, abuse by children, abduction by family or others, domestic violence, sexually exploited children, suspected involvement in criminal activity such as county-lines, trafficked children and asylum seeking children.

### 4.2. Unauthorised Absence

This category is critical to the clarification of roles of the Police and Children's Social Care. Some children absent themselves from home or care for a short period and then return, often their whereabouts are known or may be quickly established through contact with family or friends or are unknown but the children are not considered at risk.

Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed as a boundary testing activity which is well within the range of normal teenage behaviour. These children have taken '**unauthorised absence**', and would not usually come within the definition of '*missing*' for this policy.

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC, formerly ACPO) explains:

**If a child's whereabouts are known then they cannot be 'missing'. However, if they are known to be staying somewhere where they are in danger and it is not possible for the carer/person with parental responsibility to remove the child or young person, then it may still be necessary to involve Police and partners in safeguarding them.**

Social Workers and partner agencies should always consider whether unauthorised absence places a child / young person at risk. Where a young person has breached a placement curfew and is not believed to be at risk of missing the residential home or foster carer should first inform the EDT team where information will be passed to the appropriate social worker. The breaking of agreed curfews is not, by itself, a reason to report to the police.

Cases where the child is classified as "absent" will be recorded by the Police and risk assessed regularly but no active response will be deployed. Absent cases will be resolved when a young person returns or new information comes to light suggesting he/she is at risk where the case will be reclassified to "missing".

### **4.3. High risk children and young people**

The following children/ young people should automatically be considered as high risk and reported to the police:

#### High Risk Cases (Police)

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

#### High Risk Cases (Children's Social Care)

- Any child who is 12 years old or younger whose whereabouts are unknown.
- Any child deemed vulnerable due to a special educational need (such as learning and/or physical disabilities, mental, emotional or physical health problems).
- Any child/ young person who is a Looked After Child
- Any child or young person who is subject to a Child Protection Plan or is considered as a Child in Need.
- Any child/young person where there are concerns relating to Sexual Exploitation.
- Any child/ young person who is abducted from care and/or where there may be concerns in relation to possible radicalisation.

**Children who go missing frequently are at risk of exploitation. Any child that is at risk of CSE whose whereabouts cannot be established should be classed as missing although there should be sufficient risk indicators to support the**

**belief that the child is at risk, until the child can be assessed by the Police. The child's safety must be prioritised over any requests to keep information confidential.** For further detail regarding children and young people at risk of CSE please see the Merton multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Protocol.

#### **4.4. Unaccompanied children and young people**

There are complex issues facing Asylum Seeking children. Information about some children's whereabouts is not always maintained due to the transient nature of their accommodation arrangements. Agencies must be alert to the fact that some children are trafficked into, within and out of the UK and are abused and/or exploited for commercial gain, including through sex, for domestic servitude etc. The London Child Protection Procedures provide further guidance pertaining to this group of children and young people.

**The Local Authority, Police and other agency response to an Asylum Seeking child going missing should be exactly the same as for all other children, whether they are looked after or living in the community.**

#### **4.5. Harboursing**

In order to safeguard children who repeatedly go missing and are found to be with the same person, the police may issue a Child Abduction Warning Notice to any persons considered to be harboursing a young person who has run away. The Police may ask the named Social Worker for the young person to provide a Witness Statement to assist in the production of the Child Abduction Warning Notice. Repeated incidents may lead to their arrest and prosecution under Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984.

#### **4.6. National Missing Person's Helpline**

Local Authorities in England and Scotland together fund the Helpline's Missing from Care Team which provides a specialist service to Children's Social Care when any of their 'looked after' children go missing, including asylum seeking children. This working arrangement with local authorities forms the basis of an information sharing agreement with Social Care. The Missing from Care Team can be contacted on 020 8392 4527.

The National Missing Persons Helpline (NMPH) is dedicated to helping missing people, their families and those who care for them. It has information sharing agreements with the police.

The NMPH 24-hour Freephone confidential Helpline 0500 700 700 takes calls from families and police reporting missing people.

## **5. Prevention and Planning for LAC**

Research shows that children looked after by the Local Authority are over-represented in the cohort of children who go missing. Social workers and carers

should familiarise themselves with the current research on the reasons why and the circumstances in which children are likely to go missing. This may help to identify high risk factors and early warning signs and allow for early intervention to be taken.

The likelihood of children going missing or being absent can be reduced by improving the quality of care they receive, in particular:

- Reducing the instances of inappropriate placements, or inappropriate use of Section 20 in circumstances where family are known to be a danger to the child and known to interfere in the placement.
- Use of small children's homes, which have strong leadership, proper delegation of authority and responsibility and a strong, positive staff culture.
- Positive attention given to education progress as non-attendance at school and going missing are mutually reinforcing.
- Children/ young people should have regular access to a trusted adult outside of the placement, including health professionals, such as the named nurse for Looked After Children, and access to a user-friendly complaints procedure.
- Access to Independent Advocacy Services and/or Independent Visiting Services for children who are LAC. Jigsaw 4U provide this service. **Contact details** are in Appendix 6.

### 5.1. Social Care Pre-incident Risk Assessment

Prior to each placement of child Children's Social Care staff (placing Social Workers, Residential Workers and Foster Carers), must assess the risks of the child going missing or being absent.

The **Social Care Pre-Incident Risk Assessment form** (Appendix 2) should be completed within one week of the child's reception into care (for all children aged over 12 or where a risk of the child going missing is identified at the placement planning meeting). It is the responsibility of the child's Social Worker to ensure that the Pre-incident Risk Assessment is completed for children when a placement is approved and with every change of placement.

The risk assessment should be held on file for future reference with an up to date photograph. A copy of the information and an up to date photograph should also be provided to the carer to support the reporting of any missing episodes. In obtaining photographs, appropriate permission should be obtained from the child or parent.

Partners may also wish to use the form to assess children and young people who are not yet known to Children's Social Care. The key elements of the assessment should consider:

- The likelihood of the child/young person going missing, including information about previous patterns of going missing or risks associated with being missing.

- Recording all the contact names, addresses and telephone numbers of the places where the child/young person may return to.
- The child's view on the current placement/ stability of their relationships at home.
- The level of supervision/support available to the child/young person. This may, for example in extreme cases, include additional one-to-one support.
- The views of those with parental responsibility on what action should be taken if the child/young person goes missing or regularly returns home late.
- The level of risk presented if the child/young person goes missing - for example, a history of substance use (including alcohol), sexual exploitation, involvement in gangs, mental health or learning difficulties.
- Details of any medical condition and treatment that the child/young person is currently undergoing and the implications of this in terms of their absence.
- Consideration of any external influences which may result in the child's removal without consent.

It should be explained to the child what actions will be taken if he/she goes missing or is considered absent without permission. Where considered appropriate, the child should be given a copy of this pre-incident assessment.

Where a child seeks to leave their place of accommodation without permission, every effort should be made to dissuade them. It should be made very clear that they do not have permission to leave and concern for their safety should be communicated.

**The Social Care Pre-incident Risk Assessment should be recorded on the child's file in all agencies working with the child and a copy retained by the carer/residential unit.**

## 6. Responding to an Incident

### **Response Steps:**

1. [Consider whether the child is 'missing' or 'absent' respond accordingly.](#)

### **If Child is Missing:**

2. [Complete the Social Care Missing Alert & Risk Assessment](#)
3. [Notify the Police as soon as possible.](#)
4. [Arrange Strategy Meetings as appropriate.](#)
5. [Escalation Process](#)



## 6.1. Consider Category (absent or missing)

The agency first alerted to the child's absence (together with the child's parents, if the child lives at home), should give some consideration as to whether the child is having an '*unauthorised absence*', or whether he/she is '*missing*'. Only the police can make this official decision, but agencies and parents have a responsibility to ensure young people whose whereabouts are known and where there are no or low risk to the child are not reported as 'missing' to the police.

**Response for Missing Looked After Children:** Foster carers/ residential staff must, (as far as is practicable and as staffing levels will allow), **do all that a reasonable parent would do** to locate and ensure the safe return of the child/ young person. They should telephone the child, their friends or relatives to ascertain the child/ young person's location collect the child/ young person or negotiate some alternative arrangements. Before making these arrangements, the carer may wish to discuss the situation with the young person's social worker/ Emergency Duty Team (EDT). If the carer believes the child/ young person is at risk, or the carer feels that they are unable to make an informed judgment in relation to this (for example if the child is new to the placement, or if the staff on duty do not know the child well enough) they must inform the child's social worker/ team leader/ EDT immediately. The Pre-Incident risk assessment should be used to inform this process.

A **Recovery Order**<sup>1</sup> can be considered when there are dangers pertaining to the return of the child. These circumstances would not necessarily mean the child should be categorised as 'missing'.

Children who fall within the category of '*unauthorised absence*' must be the subject of continuous risk assessment whilst they remain absent. During their absence circumstances may change and the Social Worker/Emergency Duty Team and the Residential Unit Staff/Foster Carer need to be in a position to respond accordingly. The child's parents must be kept informed.

**Any unauthorised absence in excess of 24 hours should be reported to the Head of Service for LAC and for any unauthorised absence over 48 hours Missing procedures should be followed.**

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Children Act 1989, Recovery Orders provide legal measures to assist in the recovery of children who have been unlawfully taken away from or withheld from the person who is responsible for them. A Recovery Order may also be made if the children have run away, or are missing.

## 6.2. Completing the Social Care Missing Alert and Risk Assessment

The **Missing Child Alert and Risk Assessment** ([Appendix 3](#)) should be completed for all Looked After Children, Children in Need, those subject to Child Protection Procedures or open to any other Youth Inclusion Team. This should be completed within 24 hours of a child being confirmed **missing** and sent to all relevant agencies (including school and the Police Missing Persons unit within 24hours) and where required the Safeguarding Standards Service by the social worker. ***The Missing Child Alert and Risk Assessment should be updated immediately on every occasion a child is 'missing' (even if it has previously been completed as part of a previous missing event).***

Practitioners should use their professional judgment when carrying out the risk assessment and should take into consideration any factors that might have a bearing on the level of risk to the child or to others.

The child's school should always be informed; they may have valuable information which would assist in establishing his/her whereabouts. Any such information should be passed immediately to the Police.

The Missing Child Alert & Risk Assessment is an aid to action, and to information sharing and recording. It is a tool to inform single and multi-agency decision making and planning to locate a 'missing' child.

At the time that a child goes 'missing' the completed Missing Child Alert & Risk Assessment should be shared with all agencies (including school) working with the child and kept on the child's file in each agency (including school). In cases where new information becomes available and/or the child remains missing for a protracted period, the risks should be reassessed. This should be led by the agency which has current or most recent responsibility for the child. The new risk assessment should be shared with the agencies and kept on the child's file in each agency (including school). The most recently completed Missing Child Alert & Child Risk Assessment should remain on the child's file in all agencies working with the child.

**Missing episodes and unauthorised absences should be recorded on Mosaic on the day that the notification is received.**

## 6.3. Notifying and working with the Police

The Police should be notified by telephone as soon as possible, together with the completed Missing Child Alert & Risk Assessment. Sending the assessment to the police no later than within 24 hours of the missing episode.

In the absence of a full Missing Child Alert and Risk Assessment the person notifying police of a missing child or young person should endeavor to provide the following minimum information:

- A description of the child (name, date of birth, physical appearance).
- Recent photograph, if possible.

- When the child was last seen and with whom.
- Family addresses
- Relevant addresses, known associates and addresses frequented.
- Previous history of absenteeism and circumstances of where found.
- Circumstances under which the child went missing.
- Any factors that increase the risk to the child.

**The Police will conduct an investigation into all reports of ‘missing’ children and may request completion of a police ‘Trigger Plan’ for those deemed at high risk by the police.** Please see Appendix 4.

### **6.3.1. Who notifies for Looked After Children going Missing?**

Whoever discovers that a child is missing from a residential unit or foster home, should immediately inform the Residential Unit Manager/Shift Leader/Supervising Social Worker on duty and inform the police.

The allocated social worker in consultation with the residential unit Manager/Shift Leader/Foster Carer should complete the Missing Child Alert & Risk Assessment and forward to the police.

The allocated social worker should alert the Independent Reviewing Officer when a child or young person is reported as missing from their placement and the Named Nurse for Looked After Children.

If there are thought to be specific issues of safety or public order difficulties involved in returning the child, then action should be agreed between the Police, the Residential Unit Staff/Foster Carer and the Social Worker/Emergency Duty Team. (If the Local Authority think they know where a looked after child is, they should actively consider approaching the courts for a Recovery Order).

Merton MASH will notify the placing authority where children placed in Merton by other boroughs are reported missing.

### **6.3.2. Who notifies for Children missing from home?**

**There is an expectation that parents/ guardians will take appropriate action and will report that their child/ young person is missing. Failure to do so may be raised as a child protection issue and the London Child Protection Procedures must be followed.**

It should always be remembered that children missing from home face similar risks to those faced by children missing from care and local agencies should treat all instances where children are missing, seriously.

Parents/carers are also encouraged to undertake a number of actions to try and locate a child who is missing before reporting them to the Police as long as it is safe to do so. These actions include

- Fully searching the accommodation and surrounding area/vehicles.
- Search the home for any important leads e.g. mobile phones, diaries, letters, notes explaining absence, email and website activity etc.), which may inform the investigation and/or assist in protecting or recovering the child.
- Speaking with other children in the family or who live in the home to obtain relevant information about the missing child.
- Making all appropriate enquiries regards the whereabouts of the child. This will involve trying to contact the child themselves, friends, family, associates, appropriate locations, local hospitals and the local police custody office and the school.

It is expected that when a child is missing the parent/carer will inform the Police without delay. When referring to the Police any relevant information that might help to find or support the child should be shared, including:

- Description of the child including their clothing
- Details of where the child was last seen and with whom.
- Recent photograph.
- Relevant addresses, known associates and addresses frequented.
- The name of the school and the school setting.
- Previous history of absenteeism and circumstances of where found.
- Circumstances under which the child went missing.
- Any factors that increase the risk to the child.

**Professionals working with a child who is believed to be missing from home have a duty to support the parent to report the child as missing. If, for some reason, the parent does not undertake this action then the professional should contact the police themselves and have the above information to hand.**

**In cases, where a child is not known to social care and there are repeated missing incidents (three times in 28 days) Children’s Social Care will consider initiating a single assessment (dependent on risk this will be completed under S17 or S47 Children Act 1989).**

### **6.3.3. Who notifies for Children living at home who are subject to a child in need or child protection plan who go missing?**

The parent/s should notify the police as soon as they know their child is missing. The parents should then contact the child/young person’s social worker or EDT. If the parents have not contacted Police and/or EDT then the social worker should consider their duty to phone the police and address the parent’s lack of action appropriately.

### **6.3.4. Who notifies for Children and Young People Missing from school?**

Children who are missing from school may also be at greater risk of missing from care or home and vice versa.

If a member of Education staff becomes aware that a child may be missing and they should follow the procedures outlined in local Children Missing Education Policy [https://www2.merton.gov.uk/cme\\_policy\\_2017\\_final.pdf](https://www2.merton.gov.uk/cme_policy_2017_final.pdf). They should try to establish what has happened with the parents or carers. If this is not possible, the Designated Safeguarding Children Teacher should, together with relevant staff and teachers, assess the child's vulnerability.

Education staff noting the return of a missing child should establish whether Police or Children's Social Care were involved in the return and if not, inform Police and/or Children's Social Care and follow this missing protocol as required. The Children Missing from Education Panel reviews all young people who are missing from Education, including those who are also missing from home or care. This allows risks to be monitored and appropriate actions to be agreed. The missing from home and care list is provided monthly to the panel to check names on both lists. This only shares the information with those attending the panel.

### **6.3.5. Who Notifies for Children Who Go Missing During External Activities?**

If a child goes missing whilst involved in an external activity, including school trips, the person in charge of the activity will:

- Notify the local Police in that area (the investigation will be conducted by the missing persons unit where the child normally resides with the assistance of the unit where the child went missing).
- Notify their Manager.
- Notify the manager and make arrangements to ensure the child's parents are contacted. If the child is a Looked After Child, those who care for/have responsibility for the child – Residential Unit Staff/Foster Carer/ must be informed.
- If the child is a Looked After Child, notify the Social Worker with case work responsibility for the child.
- If the child is a Looked After Child, notify the Social Care Emergency Duty Team for any Local Authority which holds case responsibility for the child.
- Look around the local area, known favourite locations as staffing levels permit.

If the child is a Looked After Child the Manager of the Residential Unit and Supervising Social Worker for the Foster Carer will be responsible for ensuring the general procedures in relation to a child going missing are followed.

### **6.3.6. Working with the Police**

Police are the lead agency for the investigation of missing children. Children's Social Care is responsible for the planning and safeguarding of all children who are known to them.

**If the child is a Looked After Child then Children's Social Care are responsible for children in their care at all times and this responsibility is not absolved when a child is reported missing to the Police.**

Appropriate application of the risk assessment process by other agencies should allow the Police to be confident that all children reported to them as '*missing*' fit the agreed criteria. Referring professionals should supply the Police with a copy of the Missing Child Alert & Risk Assessment.

Relevant agencies must provide sufficient information to the Police to enable all the risk factors to be considered. Following this a full investigation should be conducted by the Police.

The Police will ensure that information on every missing child is passed to the Local Authority where the child went missing from. This information will be reviewed by an Assistant Team Manager or Team Manager and a decision made as to whether an assessment (CASA/Single Assessment) should be completed.

Until such time as a child is no longer missing, regular liaison and communication should take place between the Police and referring/involved agencies, including the Social Worker and management of the placing Authority, for a Looked After Child.

The Police will want to search the address at which the missing child was last seen, this should be negotiated so as to cause minimum disruption to the child's family home/residential unit/foster carer's home.

If the Police or other referring agency believes that the circumstances surrounding the child's missing episode put the child at risk of significant harm, then they should discuss these concerns with MASH or with the child's social worker where appropriate. Such situations might include:

- If the parents appear to show a lack of concern or inappropriately failed to report their child missing.
- Where a child under five years has a missing from home episode, Police and other practitioners should consider whether the level of supervision afforded to the child is adequate.
- Where a child under ten years has a missing from home episode and it is suspected that parental issues (e.g. substance abuse, domestic violence) may have been a factor.
- Repeated **more than three within 28 days** missing from home episodes, especially where there appears to be a lack of appropriate parental response.
- Any child deemed vulnerable due to a special educational need (such as learning and/or physical disabilities, mental, emotional or physical health problems).
- Where a child goes to an address or with adults who give cause for concern.
- Where there are concerns around possible sexual exploitation / drug misuse.

Where agencies meet with a child or young person who is known to be 'missing' information should be passed to the police as to the locality of the child. The child should be informed of this.

#### 6.4. Arrange Strategy Meetings as Appropriate

Children's Social Care must, call a face to face Strategy Meeting in the following cases:

- Where young people are missing for more than 48 hours.
- Where the young person is aged 12 or under.
- Where there are significantly high and complex risks.
- As directed by MASH following the weekly missing meeting.
- Where young people persistently go missing and persistently fail to engage with the RHI process.
- Where there is reason to believe the parents are not acting accordingly – follow usual safeguarding procedure.
- Where children have a Child Protection Plan or who are subject to a Section 47.

The strategy meeting must take place as soon as possible and within no more than three working days of the missing event and should involve representatives from all relevant agencies, including education services.

**Where children are Looked After, subject to a child protection plan or who are subject to a Section 47 enquiry representatives from the Police Missing Persons Unit and Child Abuse Investigation Team, education and health (including the Named Nurse for Looked After Children) as well as other practitioners involved with the child should be invited to attend the strategy meeting.<sup>[1]</sup>**

The Strategy Meeting must consider the following:

- Making further attempts to contact the child/young person's known relatives, friends, regular places of visit etc. Consideration should be given to writing to relatives and friends regarding the Department's concerns and the expectation that the relatives/friends will inform the Department should they obtain any relevant information.
- Writing to other local authorities and local agencies with the information about the missing child/young person. Partner agencies should receive information from each other on the basis of their need to know and in order to take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

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<sup>[1]</sup> (See Section 8, Best Practice Child Protection Conferences of the London Child Protection Procedures, part B1)

- Use of publicity. This will require appropriate agreement with the Assistant Director who will assess the individual case circumstances. The Council's press office and the Police will also need to be consulted. The child's parents must be informed prior to a press release being made and **consent should be received from them and/or those with parental responsibility**. Legal Services should be consulted with if there are any issues regarding obtaining consent.
- Social workers should be aware that it is an offence for a person to publish material which is intended to, or is likely to identify a child as being involved in court proceedings under the Children Act 1989. However, the court can give leave for this restriction to be waived if the child/young person's welfare requires it.
- Contacting the Missing Person's Helpline. This group provides a specialist service to Children's Social Services when any of their looked after children go missing, including asylum seeking children. This working arrangement with local authorities forms the basis of an information sharing agreement with Social Services.
- The child's school must be invited they may have valuable information which would assist in establishing his/her whereabouts and will need to be sited on decisions regarding what to do when they return.
- Seeking a Recovery Order and deciding how the order should be exercised i.e. should there be a joint visit with police and Social Care staff.
- Notifying national authorities and agencies, such as Department for Work and Pensions and Child Benefit agencies
- Appropriate legal interventions if there is any suspicion that the child may have been removed from UK jurisdiction.
- Whether a S47 investigation should be completed (including completion of a Single Assessment).
- Agree supports to be offered to the family. During the missing episode support will be offered by the police, CEOP and Children's Social Care. On return Catch 22 will provide support to the family.
- Whether a further strategy meeting should be called before the child/ young person has been missing for 7 days. The Missing Child Alert & Risk Assessment should inform this decision.

The decisions of the strategy meeting and the timescales must be clearly recorded; a copy should be kept on the child's case record. All agencies who attend/are invited to strategy meetings are responsible for ensuring that there is a clear statement of



the actions being taken in respect of the child's absence and should satisfy themselves that all that should be done is being done.

Further strategy meetings can be called whenever the professionals involved wish to hold one, but must take place at a minimum, once per month if the child is missing for an extended period.

#### **6.4.1. Strategy Meetings where child missing for more than 28 days**

All Police missing person's files will remain 'live' until the child is located and returned to their home, or whose circumstances are considered to be appropriate

Whenever a child is missing for more than 28 days, regular strategy meetings should be arranged by Children's Social Care. Where the child has a Child Protection Plan officers from Child Abuse Investigation Unit and the Police Missing Person Unit Should be invited.

**For Looked After Children or those known to Children's Social Care, whilst the child remains absent, his/her case should be identified as 'open' on the Children's Social care client database by the case social worker.**

**Children should not be de-accommodated whilst missing unless this is an agreed plan endorsed by the Head of Service who will ensure a multi-agency plan is put in place to safeguard the child and promote their best interests.**

#### **6.5. Escalation Process**

The relevant Head of Service and Assistant Director CSC &YI must be informed immediately of all LAC and high-risk cases (see definitions). Where the child is Looked After the Independent Reviewing Officer and the LAC health team should be informed. The Director is to be informed by the head of services when this has been for 48 hours.

**The need to inform senior managers of what has happened must not be allowed to delay action to locate and safeguard the child.**

The relevant Head of Service must be updated weekly by the Social Worker on all missing children and informed of progress against the action plan. The Head of Service must update the Assistant Director on a weekly basis.

#### ***Escalation Process:***

- 1. The social worker/Unit Manager should fully complete the Missing alert and Risk assessment at Appendix 3 (timescales for this are set out clearly above).***
- 2. This report should be sent to the relevant Head of Service for review and***

*the Head of Service for QAPD should also be copied in for information.*

- 3. The Head of Service will quality assure the information and send the briefing onto the Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion.**
- 4. The Assistant Director will in turn forward the information onto the Director Children, Families and Schools, and when required, the Chief Executive and the Lead Member.**
- 5. The Team Manager should notify their Head of Service and Assistant Director immediately upon the child's return**

Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 Stipulates that Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home (regulation 36 (schedule 3(14))). This information should be shared with the placing authority and, where appropriate, with the child's parents. Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care.

Where there are serious concerns over a child's missing behaviour, particularly where the child is considered to be at grave risk due to age or vulnerability or where they have been missing for a considerable period of time and their whereabouts is unknown a notification to Ofsted should be considered. Homes must assess each case individually, taking into account any patterns of behaviour or unusual behaviour which may indicate an increased risk to the child and consider the frequency of incidents and judge whether their cumulative effect makes notification appropriate even if in isolation each event would not warrant this.

## **7. Locating the Child and Planning their Return**

### **7.1. Planning the Return when the Child is Located**

If a child is '*missing*' the Police and parents, Social Worker, Residential Unit Staff/Foster Carer and Police should commence contingency planning for when the child is located. Plans should include:

- Will the child return to the placement/home address or are they safe in the location where they are found?
- If the child is to return, how will s/he be transported to their placement/home address?
- Where and when will the police conduct the safe and well check?
- **Confirm who will conduct the Return Home Interview** when s/he is located/returned and liaise with that person to do so.

- Informing the police where an agency meets with a child or young person who is known to be 'missing'. The child should be informed that this will happen.

Normally the Residential Unit Staff/Foster Carer or Social Worker/Emergency Duty Team out of hours will make arrangements for the transportation of a child to his/her placement/home address.

The police are however not given the power to use force to take children into Police Protection. There will be occasions when a child is found in a location that may be considered unsuitable, but where there would be no legal grounds for taking them into police protection or where to do so would be unsustainable because of the child. Children's Social Services will need to liaise to discuss what steps may be necessary in order to safeguard the child's welfare.

**The child's parents/carers and all agencies informed of the missing episode should be advised of the child's return without delay. This will be the responsibility of the allocated worker.**

## **7.2. Police Safe and Well Check/Prevention Interview**

Safe and well checks are conducted mainly by police officers. However, a Social Worker/professional can also complete Safe and Well check for Medium or Low risk missing children. The police/Social Worker/professional will establish that the child is safe and well by asking a brief series of questions to establish where the child was whilst missing, what they did and who they were with. If the child makes an allegation of crime that occurred whilst they were missing or that contributed to him/her running away, this must be reported to the Police by the Social Worker/professional conducting the safe and well check. The Police will record this allegation and take appropriate action.

Safe and Well Check/Prevention interviews are essential if the police, along with partners, are to enable problem solving in cases of missing person. They are also an essential part of the return process to recognize vulnerability and criminality that missing children may have been exposed to, and to be in a position to respond accordingly.

The circumstances of each low and medium risk case will dictate the methodology of the Police Safe and Well check/Prevention interview. Within **24 hours** of police locating the missing child or being notified of their return, the police will apply one of the following options:

1. Liaise via telephone with the parent/carers/medical professional in charge of the subject and confirm wellbeing (no deployment, follow aide-memoire, Merlin updated)
2. Liaise directly via telephone/video call with subject and confirm wellbeing (no deployment, follow aide-memoire, Merlin updated)
3. Deploy and conduct formal face-to-face prevention interview (follow aide-memoire, Merlin updated)

High Risk cases will continue to demand a face-to-face prevention interview and this will be conducted within 1 hour of them being located by police or police being notified of their return.

The Merton Missing Person Unit will automatically notify the Mash of all young people who have received a police safe and well-check. The Merton Misper Unit may not always be informed of a young person's return in the cases where LAC young people are placed far out of borough.

### 7.3. Independent Return Home Interviews (RHIs)

Independent Return Interviews should take place with all children who have been reported missing and returned home or back to their placement and should, **take place within 72 hours of their return and be held in a neutral place where the child feels safe and be independent of the child's family, placement or care.**

The interview is an opportunity to identify and understand any risks and issues experienced by the child. Providing children with an opportunity to talk is key to safeguarding them. The interview should explore the push factors for the missing episode in addition to the identification of risk factors for the child. **The Return Home Interview Questionnaire** is found in Appendix 5. The interview should:

- identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered – including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the 'safe and well check' – either before they ran away or whilst missing;
- understand and try to address the reasons why the child ran away;
- help the child feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away;
- provide them with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers;
- Try to identify someone that they could talk to.

#### 7.3.1. Who interviews the child?

When a Looked After Child, child subject to an assessment, child in need or child subject to a child protection plan has been missing, the carer and social worker must consider who is the most appropriate person to conduct the Independent Return Home Interview. The child should be asked who they wish to speak to. This could be a social worker other than the child's social worker, a teacher, a school nurse or Named Nurse for LAC, YOT Worker, a voluntary sector practitioner or a police officer whom the child knows and trusts. There is also a need to consider if there are any health issues/risks and if health advice is needed.

**For Looked After Children, it is the responsibility of the residential unit Manager/Supervising Social Worker and placing Authority to ensure that the Independent Return Home Interview takes place.**

For children living in the community, the Police and Children's Social Services have responsibility for ensuring that opportunity for an independent interview is provided. The **Return Home Interview Questionnaire** is found in Appendix 5.

In most cases the independent person will be a representative from Merton's commissioned CSE and Missing Service provided by Catch22. Catch22 are commissioned to conduct RHIs with young people living at home in Merton and those placed within an hour's travel distance of Merton. They can also offer telephone interviews for children and young people placed further afield, if appropriate. Catch22 does not offer RHIs for young people placed in Merton by other London Boroughs. This is the responsibility of the placing authority. RHIs can, however, be purchased from Catch22 for these young people. The LAC team manager will be responsible for identifying the most appropriate person to conduct the RHI.

**Where it has been agreed that the interview will be carried out by an agency other than Catch22 it is that agencies responsibility to inform Catch22.**

Return home interviews are prioritised by Catch22 on receipt of referral using the following criteria:

**RED:** Serious Risk. Where a child is LAC, has a CP plan, has been previously known to social care or where a potential safeguarding risk is identified, e.g. serious injury to the child, aged 12 or under or CSE risk.

**AMBER:** High Risk. There are significant concerns. Requires more information

**GREEN:** Medium Risk. There are concerns regarding child's wellbeing but there appears to be no immediate risk of harm.

**BLUE:** Low Risk. There is no immediate or potential safeguarding concern. Appears to be a 'one off'.

Copies of the interview, regardless of who is conducting, should be sent to the MASH service and appropriate social worker (where they have one) and on agreement with the child, shared with the school. The social worker is responsible for ensuring the interview is recorded in the child's electronic file within 48 hours of the interview and **the pre-incident risk Assessment form updated accordingly**. The MASH team will be responsible for recording RHIs where the young person does not have a Social Worker.

#### **7.4. Support Beyond Return Home Interview:**

Any information obtained during an independent return interview that may affect any future risk assessment, or may assist in finding the child should they go missing again should be exchanged between the Police, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies involved with the child. This will help build up a comprehensive picture of why the child was absent and what support they and their carers may require to reduce future missing episodes and risk to the child.

Catch22 are also commissioned to offer a period of support beyond RHI for those at high risk of repeat episodes. Support packages are evidence based, time limited and goal oriented and may include onward referral to other sources of support such as parenting courses or support groups such as girls and gangs worker, BYM service, Risk and Resilience Service and parenting programmes. Packages may include:

- Development of strategies aimed to reduce risk or harm, such as reducing association with risky peers / adults, prevention of substance misuse, sexual health strategies.
- Practical and emotional support (including mediation and support to succeed in education) with young people and their families.
- Support to families/parents to enable them to understand why the child has run away, identification of CSE risks and prevention strategies.
- Promoting and linking young people with positive activities within local community.
- Involvement of LAC health team for advice and co-ordination of care; e.g. re-scheduling statutory health assessments.

#### **7.5. Non-engagement in RHI process**

Engagement in the RHI process is voluntary, however, young people who persistently go missing, whether missing from home or care, and do not engage in RHIs may also be at high risk. A strategy meeting should always be considered for young people persistently not attending RHIs. This may be organized by the social worker or by the agency tasked to conduct RHIs where the young person is not involved in social care.

**Non engagement in RHIs should be reported to MASH.**

### **8. Strategic Oversight and Governance**

The Head of Service for MASH is the Named Person with responsibility for Missing Children and will ensure regular reports on children who go missing are presented to senior management and are governed by the Promote and Protect Young People Subgroup of the MSCB.

Children's residential units should supply monthly information to the placing Local Authority about children who have gone missing. This report is produced by an officer independent of the home.

Weekly and Bi-monthly interagency meetings monitor the immediate exchange of information regarding missing young people and the implementation of this policy and corresponding protocol.

## 8.1. MASH Weekly Missing Meeting

A weekly meeting is hosted by the MASH to consider the children and young people that have been reported in the previous 7 days and ongoing plans high risk cases who have returned. This meeting will ensure that cases are being dealt with in a timely manner and in line with joint protocols. The main aims of the weekly missing meeting are to:

- Review the latest missing case load to share intelligence and information relating to individual missing children/young people.
- Establish responsibility for conducting RHIs where there are ambiguities (such as a number of multi-agency professionals involved).
- Identify and discuss high priority cases and/or young people with a high number of missing episodes especially those who frequently do not engage in RHIs.
- Generate intelligence for investigations and identify any trends or problem locations and ensure they are dealt with.
- To provide advice and guidance to professionals in relation to cases where children/young people are reported as missing or absent.
- To identify any training needs of professionals and inform the Bi-monthly missing meeting.

The weekly missing meeting is intended to act as a safety network to ensure all missing young people are being worked with appropriately.

**You should not wait for the weekly missing meeting to either report a child as missing or to arrange a strategy meeting. Further information regarding this meeting is contained within the weekly missing meeting terms of reference.**

## 8.2. The Bi-monthly Merton Missing

The Bi-monthly missing meeting meets every second month and will take place after the weekly missing meeting. Both weekly and Bi-weekly missing meetings are coordinated by the MASH. The main aims of the bi-monthly meetings are to:

- Receive and review quarterly intelligence regarding missing episodes, trends and uptake of RHIs from the research and information team.
- Share intelligence and information relating to high priority missing children/young people. This is to generate intelligence for investigations and identify any trends or problem locations and ensure they are dealt with.
- Look at cross border issues and ensure there is a co-ordinated approach with other boroughs.



- To provide advice and guidance to professionals in relation to cases where children/young people are reported as missing or absent.
- To identify any training needs of professionals and inform the Merton Learning and Development sub group.

The bi-monthly meeting will also monitor the cohort of young people reported missing in the previous months and agree actions on any exceptional cases requiring further discussion (such as those involved in serious criminal activity, vulnerable to sexual exploitation, or vulnerabilities in relation to age) and/or review repetitive cases of concern.

A report on children missing from home and care will be presented to the PPYP on a 6 monthly basis. This report will monitor outcomes and analyse patterns including those children placed in the area by other local authorities.

The Chair of the bi-monthly missing meeting will report to Promote and Protect Young People Strategic Subgroup of the MSCB.



## 1. Appendix: Push / Pull Factors

A young person who goes missing for more than one night or frequently is an indicator in research for:

- Sexual Exploitation
- Substance misuse, drug dealing and criminal exploitation by gangs
- Radicalisation
- Trafficking
- Labour exploitation

There are a number of variables depending on the age of the child and their personal circumstances but below is a summary of the key 'push' and 'pull' factors for why a child or young person may go missing:

### **Push Factors**

**Problems at home:** for those who ran away repeatedly, particularly high levels of family problems and disruption were identified.

**Family Break-up:** conflict with parents or stepparents is the most common reason given by children for running away. The need to escape difficulties between parents including domestic violence, drug and alcohol problems and persistent arguments were a major influence for some young people; as were boundary and control issues and feelings of unfair treatment for others. Running away was rarely motivated by the need for excitement

Over a quarter of the children in the *Safe on the Streets* survey were attempting to escape physical and emotional abuse, rejection or neglect. British and American studies support the finding that abuse and neglect are important factors underlying the decision to run away, especially for children who first run away from home before the age of 11; and even among those who have run away only once or twice

**Mental Health problems:** a disproportionate number of young people that runaway from home have some sort of mental health problems

**Bullying:** children who are severely bullied are more likely to run away from school, home and care. Problems at school are only likely to be a direct trigger for running away for a relatively small minority of children.

### **Pull Factors**

Running to be near friends or family – especially when a young person is in care and there are problems in contact arrangements with family and friends.

Grooming for potential sexual exploitation or child trafficking – young people may run away or go missing following grooming by adults who will seek to exploit them.

## 2. Appendix: Social Care Pre Incident Risk Assessment

The Social Care Pre Incident Risk Assessment should be recorded on the child's file in all agencies working with the child.

Wherever possible staff should enhance their ability to make a Social Care Pre Incident Risk Assessment by acquainting themselves with the current body of knowledge about children who go missing.

Factor Impacting on the likelihood of a child going missing	Details and Explanation
Child's view on current placement/stability of their relationships at home	
Level of Supervision/support that care staff propose to provide for the child	
The degree of risk to the child if they do go missing – using the <b>Social Care Risk Assessment Record</b> in <a href="#">Appendix 3</a>	
The views of parents/carers in their child's needs and the action that needs to be taken if their child is missing	
Consideration of any external influences which may result in a child's removal without consent (See also Safeguarding Trafficked and Exploited Children, London Board 2006)	

### 3. Appendix: Missing Child Alert and Risk Assessment Record

Child's full name and DOB: (Alias if known)	Next of Kin relationship, name & address:
Date and Time child was last seen:	
With whom:	
Address where child currently resides (Family home, Residential Unit, Foster Carer)	
Address where child has gone missing from (if different from above)	
Residential Unit/Foster Carer Contact Tel	Contact Name:
Doctor:	Dentist:
Child's Oyster card number:	Child's email address if known:
Childs Mobile Phone Number:  Blackberry Pin number if known/relevant:	Child's N.I. Number:
Occupation/School/College:	Occupation/School/College contact number:
<b>Description of the Child</b>	
Ethnic Origin & Appearance:	
Height & Build:	Gender:
Appearance incl. Clothing, eye colour, hair, glasses, tattoos, piercings, facial hair, other distinguishing features (include a recent photograph):	

Family History (Brief details):			
<b>Information about friends and relatives etc, visited/ spoken to:</b>			
Date	Time	Name/Phone Number & Address	Result of enquiries
<b><u>Missing Child Risk Assessment Record</u></b>			
<b>Risk Factors</b>		<b>Details and Explanation</b>	
10 years old or under			
11 to 14 years of age			
15 up to 18 years of age			
Has a Child Protection Plan			
Needs essential medication or treatment not readily available to them e.g. asthma inhaler, insulin.			
May not have the physical ability to interact safely with others or in an unknown environment, e.g. visually impaired, history of abuse or inappropriate adult/stranger relationships, Down's Syndrome etc.			
Lacks reasonable awareness of the risks associate with running away, incl. Learning disabled.			
Known to associate with adults or children who present a risk of harm e.g. Sexual Offenders, Offenders Against Children.			

Mental illness or psychological disorder that may increase risk of harm to themselves or others.	
Drugs and/or alcohol use	
Suspicion of abduction	
Suspected suicide or self harm	
Involved in violent and/or racial incident or confrontation immediately prior to disappearance.	
Concerns about state of mind e.g. unusual behaviour prior to disappearance or disappeared with no prior indication, or seemed troubled etc.	
Inclement weather conditions where exposure would seriously increase risk to health.	
Family/relationship problems or recent history of family conflict/abuse.	
Employment Problems	
Financial Problems	
School or college problems	
Ongoing Victim of bullying, harassment, or exploitation e.g. racial, sexual etc.	
Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing.	
Victim or potential victim, of forced marriage, FGM or trafficking, including sexual exploitation.	

**Risk assessment outcome;**  
Is this child a high risk case?

The relevant Head of Service and Assistant Director CSC &YI must be informed immediately of all LAC and high-risk cases (see escalation process). The Director is to be informed by the head of services when this has been for 48 hours.

**Summary of Risk** (Summarise the risks in a couple of sentences)

**Summary of Actions Taken** (Include attempts to talk to child on mobile phone and attempts to contact family & friends)

**Review Date for Actions Decided**

**Completed by, full name**

**Signature**

**Date:**

This Risk Assessment is an aid to action and for information sharing and recording.

**Aid to action:** As an action tool the purpose of the Risk Assessment is to inform single and multi-agency agency decision making and planning to locate a '**missing**' child. The Risk Assessment provides an indication of:

- The urgency of inquiries
- Areas of inquiry e.g. where drugs are available or that certain adults frequent, country of origin or country children are trafficked on to etc.
- Type of specialist knowledge that might be needed
- The supervision that may be required
- Agencies who may be first alerted e.g. local Accident & Emergency services

**Aid for information sharing and recording:** At the time that a child goes '**missing**' the completed Risk Assessment should be shared with all agencies working with the child and kept on the child's file in each agency. In cases where new information becomes available and/or the child remains absent for a protracted period, the risks should be reassessed, shared with the agencies and kept on the child's file in each agency. The most recently completed Risk Assessment should remain on the child's file in all agencies working with the child.

## 4. Appendix: Police Missing Person Trigger Plan



Trigger plan agreed: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

### Missing Person Trigger Plan

**Subject Name:** [Add subjects name]

This is a Missing Person Trigger Plan, its purpose is to outline the agreed multi-agency response for individuals who are considered to be at risk of going missing, and where there is a significant risk of harm to the subject or the volume of times they go missing is considered to be excessive.

SUBJECT		POLICE OWNER	
Name		Name and Rank	
Date of Birth		OCU	
PNCID		Unit/Team	
Cris/Crimint		Location	
		Contact	
		Email	

APPEARANCE	
NATIONALITY	
IC Code	
Height	
Build	
Dress	
Eyes	
Hair	
Tattoos / Scars	
Other	

CURRENT HOME ADDRESS & CONTACT	
Address	
Mobile	
Home	
Email	

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY	
Name	
Address	
Mobile	
Home	



Approximate date photo taken:  
[Click here to enter a date.](#)

**PARENTS / CARERS AND FAMILY (addresses / contact numbers & comments)**

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ADDRESSES / CONTACT NUMBERS &amp; COMMENTS</i>

**ASSOCIATES (addresses / contact numbers & comments)**

<i>NAME</i>	<i>ADDRESSES / CONTACT NUMBERS &amp; COMMENTS</i>

**RELEVANT ADDRESSES AND LOCATIONS FREQUENTED**

<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>REASON FOR RELEVANCE (include dates and locations previously found)</i>

**OTHER**

<b>MEDICAL ISSUES</b>	
OYSTER CARD NUMBER	
SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS	

**ORDERS**

<i>ORDER TYPE</i>	<i>DETAILS OF ORDER (Include act/section and dates)</i>

**LOCAL AUTHORITY**

Local Authority where LAC	
Social Worker (Name/Contact number and email)	
Out of hours contact Emergency Duty Team (EDT)	

**BACKGROUND**

*Overview of the subject and associated risks*



Click here to enter text.

### **IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN REPORTED MISSING**

*Actions for consideration when the subject is reported missing, this should not be a generic action plan, this should be bespoke for the subject. Multi-agency actions should be agreed as part of a strategy meeting and include actions to be taken by all persons involved with the subject, including carers/parents.*

#### **POLICE:**

Click here to enter text.

#### **MULTI-AGENCY:**

Click here to enter text.

### **ACTIONS UPON SUBJECT BEING LOCATED**

*Officers should always tailor their actions to the individual missing episode and consider their powers of police protection where relevant.*

**POLICE:**

Click here to enter text.

**MULTI-AGENCY:**

Click here to enter text.

**OTHER INFORMATION NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE**

*Use this field to add any other information that may be considered useful should the subject go missing*

Click here to enter text.

## 5. Appendix: Independent Return Home Interview Questionnaire

### Missing From Home & Care & CSE Service Initial Return Interview Form<sup>[2]</sup>

Name:	Date of Birth: Age:											
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Disability</th> <th>ASD</th> <th>ADHD</th> <th>MH issue</th> <th>Learning disability</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Disability	ASD	ADHD	MH issue	Learning disability	Other					
Disability	ASD	ADHD	MH issue	Learning disability	Other							
Residential provider:	School/College:  Persistent absence <input type="checkbox"/> No school											
Date Seen:	Time:											
Return interview conducted with:	Other Professionals/Agencies:											
TAF/CIN/LAC/Child protection/Multiple/Other:  Social Worker Name:	Details of care plan:  MFH      Foster Family      Residential Unit MFC      Care Leaver      Secure Accommodation											
Reason for missing: What happened to make you want to run? (push/pull factors)  What do you want to happen now? (short and long term – including relationship and success in your education).	Where they went: What happened whilst you were away, who were you with? (any risk taking behaviour/risk to self/others?)											
Immediate risks identified: Did you feel safe whilst you were away? Any protective factors (e.g. phone remained contactable) What happened when you returned & what can be done to stop you going again? (include parent/carer views)	Known associates Individuals/Friends  Known associates Groups/Gangs											

<sup>[2]</sup> Produced with kind permission from Catch22

Outcomes of return interview			
Return interview sent to MASH/SW/:			
Safeguarding Referral: CSE issue Referred to MACSE Referred to Channel Panel			
Referral to other agency:			
Ongoing work, including relationship with education:			
Support provided (including to Care Home)		Details.....	
Significant information			
Living arrangements/family life: Domestic Abuse:			
Drugs/alcohol/CSE/Gangs/Peers:			
Social media:			
Aspirations:			
Category 1 No current risk	Category 2 Mild risk	Category 3 Moderate risk	Category 4 Significant risk

## 6. Appendix: Useful Contacts

### **Metropolitan Police Missing Person Unit**

0300 123 1212

Email: [missingpersonrisk@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:missingpersonrisk@met.pnn.police.uk) or [znmispers@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:znmispers@met.pnn.police.uk)

### **MASH**

020 8545 4226

[mash@merton.gov.uk](mailto:mash@merton.gov.uk)

### **Social Care Emergency Duty Team**

020 8770 5000

### **Catch 22, Missing and CSE Service**

020 3701 8641

### **Missing Persons Charity:**

020 8392 4527, 24 hours/day

### **CAMHS**

020 8254 8061

[ssg-tr.mertoncamhs@nhs.net](mailto:ssg-tr.mertoncamhs@nhs.net)

### **Jigsaw4U**

Advocacy and Independent Visiting Services (for LAC) 020 8687 1384

### **LAC Nursing Team**

020 8545 4353

[clcht.lacmerton@nhs.net](mailto:clcht.lacmerton@nhs.net)

### **Youth Justice Team**

020 8274 4949

[grpmerton-yos@merton.gov.uk](mailto:grpmerton-yos@merton.gov.uk)

### **Hospitals:**

St George's: 0208 672 1255

St Helier: 0208 296 2000

Kingston: 020 8546 7711

Croydon: 020 8401 3000

### **National Missing Person's Helpline**

0808 800 70 70

National 24 hour Freephone Helpline for anyone aged 17 or under who has run away or been forced to leave home. Confidential advice is given, referrals made to other organisations and it can help a child or young person get to a place of safety or pass on a message.

### **Ofsted Notifications of Missing for Children's Homes:**

0300 123 4666

[CIE@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:CIE@ofsted.gov.uk)

# 7. Appendix: Missing Protocol Flow Chart

## Missing Protocol

Social workers, carers and other professionals to be aware of the Push and Pull factors of Missing Young People (Appendix 1)

