



Safeguarding Children Who Run Away & Go Missing



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Foreword

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

It was drafted on behalf of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board, which agreed the Protocol in **May 2011**.

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

Kent Safeguarding Children Board expects all agencies working with children or young people who go missing from home or care, to implement this Protocol and ensure that all relevant staff are aware of it and how to use it.

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

Introduction and Legislative Framework

This Protocol has been developed by the Kent Safeguarding Children Board and should be used in conjunction with the Kent & Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures.

This Protocol considers the following legislation, Case Law and guidance.

- [Children Act 1989 Sections 20, 27, 49, 50, 51.](#)
- [The Children Act 2004 Section 10 \(1\) \(2\)](#)
- [The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Vol 1, 4.88., 4.91.](#)
- [LAC \(2002\) 17, 'Children Missing from Home and Care – Good Practice Guidance'](#).
- [Department of Health \(2002\) 'Children Missing from Care and from Home – A Guide to Good Practice', Department of Health Publications:](#)
- [Statutory Guidance on Children who Run Away and Go Missing from Home or Care Supporting local authorities to meet the requirements of National Indicator 71 – Missing from Home and Care Issued: July 2009](#)
- [Housing Act 1996, Part 7](#)
- [Child Abduction Act 1984](#)
- [Information Sharing Practitioners Guide](#)
- [Case Law: R \(G\) v London Borough of Southwark.](#)
- [Education and Inspection Act 2006](#)
- [Education Act 1996](#)

Definitions

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

- **Child:** A child or young person who is or claims to be under the age of eighteen years.

- **Missing Person:** “A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of disappearance. He or she will be considered missing until located and his or her well being, or otherwise, established
- **Runaway;** A child or young person, who is absent from their home or placement without permission for any length of time where their age and experience, background and ability make this a concern or who has been forced to leave by their parents or carers.
- **Police SPOC:** Single Point of Contact
- **Unauthorised Absence:** Where a looked-after child’s whereabouts is known or thought to be known but unconfirmed, they are not missing and may instead be considered as absent without authorisation from their placement.
- **Child Abduction:** Where a child has been abducted or forcibly removed from their place of residence, this is a ‘crime in action’ and should be reported to the police immediately.
- **Forced Marriage:** Some young people run away because they are at risk of abuse. Forced marriage in particular can lead to young women running away from home. Further guidance and information can be found at: www.fco.gov.uk/en/fcoin-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit/
- **Child Trafficking:** Where the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation
- **Absconded:** When a child or young person has gone missing who is subject to legal orders such as secure orders. Police must be made aware of the order under which the child has been placed in the residence and the expiry date of the order for the child to be classified as an absconder. If the expiry date of the order is not known, the child or young person will be classified as a “missing person” NOT an absconder.
- **Looked After:** A child is looked after by a local authority if s/he is “in care” by reason of a court order, or if s/he is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by agreement with her/his parents or with the child if s/he is aged 16 or more.
- **Accommodated:** A child is accommodated if the Local Authority looks after him with the voluntary agreement of his / her parents or with the child if s/he is over 16 years old.
- **Children not receiving a suitable education (CME):** Any children of compulsory school age (5-16 years) who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school, for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision.

National Context

The Children’s Society’s *Still Running II* (2005) survey estimates that around 100,000 young people under the age of 16 run away from home or care each year across the UK. Many of these young people stay with friends or family members, but there are some who do not have access to these networks of support and end up in harmful situations such as sleeping rough.

Local Context

12,000 individuals reported missing incidents occur each year in Kent and Medway. Approximately, 85% of these involve children and young people.

Reasons why children and young people run away

Children and young people run away for a variety of reasons, but whatever the reason, running away is often a sign that something is wrong in the child's or young person's life and a response must be made quickly.

In order to conduct a thorough assessment, it is important to ask the child's or young person the reason why they have run away, as this will inform decisions about the appropriate service intervention or response.

Research carried out by the Social Exclusion Unit *Young Runaways* (2002); found that the top reasons for running away are:

Push factors:

- Problems at home – ranging from arguments with parents to long-term abuse or maltreatment.
- Family break-up – young people drawn into their parents' conflicts are less likely to do well at school and more likely to truant or to run away from home.
- Mental health problems – a disproportionate number of young people who run away from home have a mental health problem.
- Bullying – children who are being severely bullied are more likely to run away from school and home or care.
- Teenage pregnancy – some young women run away or are forced to leave home because they become pregnant (or fear that they may be pregnant). They may also be in denial about their pregnancy, meaning that they are not getting the advice they need about pregnancy options. There is also a greater risk of pregnancy when girls run away, and those working with them will need to ensure they have rapid access to confidential contraception and sexual health services to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

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.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

The CAF is a consent-based tool for assessing a child in a holistic way to identify their additional needs. There is no need to assess every child using the CAF – and the pre-CAF checklist may be a useful way of determining whether a CAF is necessary. A CAF is particularly useful if the child's needs are not immediately obvious or if the child has additional needs. In these cases, the CAF can help identify other services that should be involved with the child/ parent. The CAF form does not need to be followed robotically because the form is a way recording conversation(s) between the practitioner and the child or young person. The level of detail in each part will vary according to the child's needs and circumstances.

If the child has complex needs, they should be referred to the appropriate agency for a more specialist assessment. This specialist assessment will build on the work undertaken in completing the CAF. If there is any protection risk, the usual safeguarding route should be taken immediately.

The use of the CAF as a means of analysing the child's needs will enable practitioners to combine their assessment with that of any other professional who might already be working with a child or have completed a specialist assessment for them. With consent from the child (where it is considered they are competent to do so), and that if children were 'Fraser competent' and or with parental consent and involvement. The child, their parents, practitioners from different agencies will be able to share information about a child's needs, enabling them to work more effectively together, build up a holistic picture and develop a better co-ordinated response.

Lead Professional

Where it is decided that a child needs support from several agencies, having a Lead Professional should help ensure full co-ordination of the actions identified in the assessment process. The Lead Professional will provide a main point of contact for the child and, where appropriate, their family; and statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care will help the young person and their family to access services. It is essential that the Lead Professional is able to build up the trust and support necessary to facilitate the delivery of services for the young person.

Information about the CAF and Lead Professional, including examples of emerging good practice can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/integratedworking/

Missing From Home Address

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

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

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

All children who go missing from home should be reported to the Police

NB

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

Offences In Relation To Missing Children

Anyone who 'takes or detains' a runaway under 16 without lawful authority may be prosecuted under [Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984](#), where the child is under 16.

A child can be the victim of abduction under the 1984 Act for many different reasons. The law states that it is an offence if there is "an intentional or reckless taking or detention of a child under the age of 16, the effect or objective consequence of which is to remove or to keep the child....it is immaterial that the child consents or not" **!** Alternatively, if the child is in care of the local authority and is over 16 but under 18 then an offence under section 46 of the children act 1989 should be considered, s. 49, which is acting in contravention of protection order or power exercised

Perpetrators of these offences will often harbour runaways exposing them to risk of harm. In more serious cases where the abduction of a child is apparent or suspected and the circumstances give rise to the immediate personal safety of that child, research has shown that the first five hours can be critical if the person is to be found alive. Any details of suspected perpetrators must be given to police even if no prosecution is brought to enable police to serve the perpetrators with a warning notice in relation to child abduction and harbouring as a prevention tactic and to assist in any later prosecutions. Although the welfare of the child is the first consideration, attention must be paid to the seriousness of the offence and the likelihood of repetition.

Quick Reference Guide – Missing From Home Address

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

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

All efforts to locate the child / young person must be recorded and auditable.

Police Officers to conduct a Risk Assessment which will form the basis for resulting proportionate actions. Enquiries are then ongoing.

YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM HOME PROCESS FLOWCHART

Identify child/young person is missing

Parents/carer/responsible adult identify time by which the child should be at the address.

Parents/carer/responsible adult should make enquiries to locate the missing young person with relatives/friends.

This should include searches of the residence and local area if the child or young person is not located.

Report to police

Parents/carer/responsible adult should telephone police with details of the missing person.

Details required: child's name/DOB/where, when and who missing with?/what child was last wearing/description of young person/recent photo/medical history/time and location last seen/circumstances of going missing/details of friends and associates.

Officers conduct a risk-assessment forming the basis for resulting proportionate actions

Enquiries are then on-going.

Sharing of information between the police, parents and other agencies as appropriate.

Young person is located or returns to home address

When a missing child is located by family or friends etc, it is their responsibility to return the child to the home address.

Where a risk is present, a police officer may accompany the family or the police may be requested to collect and return the child/young person to the place of residence only if it is safe to do so. Parents must inform the police when a child returns of their own accord.

The police should notify the relevant local authority

The Police notify KCAS of the child's details. KCAS will record as a contact and check whether the child is open to CSS or YOS. If the child has an open involvement, their details will be passed to their lead professional. If the child is not open and does not meet the eligibility criteria, the Police Missing Persons Co-ordinator should pass their details to the relevant Preventative Services Manager and Early Intervention Co-ordinator.

If the child is a Looked After Child placed by another local authority, the Missing Person's Co-ordinator will make contact with the relevant placing local authority to inform them of the return of the child or young person to their placement.

PSM/Early Intervention Co-ordinator to identify Practitioner to carry out a Return

Interview and Assessment of Need

Police Missing Persons Co-ordinator to share information from Secure and Well Check with practitioner carrying out returner interview. Return interview and assessment of need to be carried out within 10 working days using the CAF (check whether CAF already exists) with the consent of the child and/or parent/carer.

Agree and provide advice and support and review progress

Based on the assessment, the outcome may be (1) no further action needed (2) the child and family's needs can be met by a single agency (3) multi-agency support may be needed. If multi-agency support is needed, this may be discussed at the Single Point of Access (SPA) meeting (the district CAF Co-ordinator will advise). If multi-agency support is agreed, a Team Around the Child (TAC) will be formed. The TAC will meet with the child and family to agree the desired outcomes, action plan and identify a lead professional. Progress of the plan should be reviewed regularly.

In some cases, specialist assessment may be required should it appear that the child or young person has complex needs. The common assessment can be used to inform the specialist assessment.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM SUITABLE EDUCATION (CME)

Children missing from education are defined as children of 'statutory school age' (5-16 years) who are not receiving or at risk of not receiving a suitable education (usually agreed as four weeks or more). They include:

- Children who move within or across local authority boundaries.
- Children who 'disappear' from a school roll.
- Children who fail to make transition between education providers.
- Children who cease to attend due to illegal exclusion / removal from the school roll or are withdrawn from education by their parents.
- Children who fail to start appropriate provision and hence never enter the education system.

Who are the children at risk of missing education? (This list is not exclusive)

- Children and young people under the supervision of the youth justice system.
- Children from families fleeing domestic violence
- Children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast.
- Young runaways
- Children in families involved in anti-social behavior
- Children who are subject to a child protection plan
- Children affected by substance and/or alcohol abuse
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers, children of refugees and asylum seeking families.
- Looked after children /children in care, children who go missing from care.
- Children who are privately fostered
- Children who do not receive a suitable education whilst being educated at home.
- Children who have been bullied
- Children who have suffered discrimination on the grounds of race, faith, gender, disability or sexuality.
- Children in new immigrant families who are not yet established in the UK and may not have a fixed abode.
- Children of migrant families unfamiliar with the education system
- Children of highly mobile families e.g. parents in armed forces, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families.
- Children at risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked to or within the UK.
- Children permanently excluded, particularly those excluded unlawfully.
- Children who do not receive a suitable education whilst being educated at home.
- Children at risk of honour based violence including forced marriage or female genital mutilation.
- Children with long term medical needs or emotional problems
- Children of parents with learning difficulties
- Children of parents with mental health problems
- Children who were registered with a school that has closed and have not made a transition to another school
- Children whose parents take them abroad for prolonged period
- Teenage parents
- Young carers

Reasons that children may be missing from education

Children missing/absconding from their registered school or education provider

Where children unexpectedly go missing from their registered school or education provider i.e. they abscond on route to school or during the school day, parents/ carers must be informed immediately and the police involved where appropriate. Education providers must have robust procedures in place for such eventualities in line with their individual attendance policies and police officers attending under these circumstances should enquire what procedures staff have implemented to minimize a duplication of effort.

Schools must complete CME 1 & CME 2 referral forms and forward to their Education Welfare Officer (EWO). (See flowchart pg12 for school process).

CME Guidance and referral forms can be found at: www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/ and www.kent.gov.uk/cme

Children with irregular or non - attendance

Initial investigation of irregular or non-attendance must be conducted by the school or education provider in accordance with their published attendance procedures and, unresolved concerns referred to the Attendance and Behaviour Service (EWO) for investigation.

Where enquiries indicate the child and/or family may be missing, schools and providers must complete CME1 and CME 2 referral forms and forward to their EWO.

CME Guidance and referral forms can be found at: www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/ and www.kent.gov.uk/cme

Children not registered in a school or education provider

Families moving within or across local authority boundaries may already be known to KCC or other local authority Admissions Departments as they are in the process of applying for a school place; other families may need help from EWOs or other professionals to complete this process.

KCC admissions information can be found at: Kent.admissions@kent.gov.uk

Contact details

There is a named point of contact for children missing from suitable education (CME) in every local authority. Anyone who believes a child may be missing from education should refer to the CME team in one of the following ways:

- e-mail: CME@kent.gov.uk
- phone: **08458 247 247**
- post: complete CME 2 form and send to: **Children Missing Education Team, Attendance and Behaviour Service, Room 2.05, Sessions House, Maidstone ME14 1XQ**

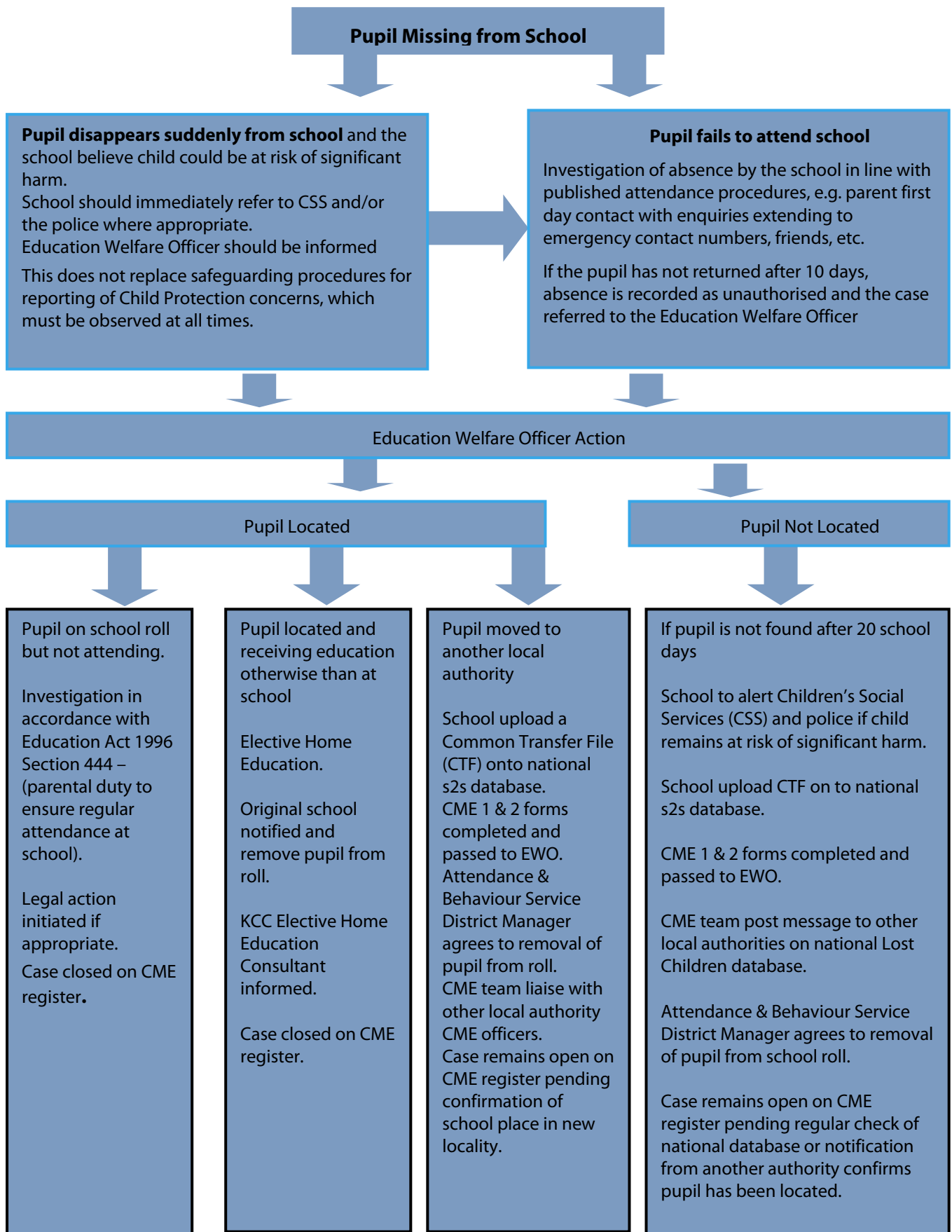
Form can be located at: www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/ and www.kent.gov.uk/cme

The CME team will follow up referrals liaising with other agencies and local authorities as appropriate to establish whether or not the child is missing from education. Referrals are recorded, monitored and tracked until such a time as suitable provision is identified.

ATTENDANCE & BEHAVIOUR SERVICE

Children Missing from Suitable Education

School Process Flowchart



ATTENDANCE & BEHAVIOUR SERVICE
Children Missing from Suitable Education
Sources of Referral and CME Process

KCC services, statutory and voluntary agencies, Health, schools, education providers, members of the public and other local authorities

Children Missing Education Team (CME)
 Referral details recorded on CME register.
 EMS and Impulse databases checked

Child moved to other local authority (OLA)
 Where destination known, OLA (CME) team alerted.
 Where destination not known, child's details entered onto s2s national database

Confirmed on a school roll
 Referral to Attendance & Behaviour Service to investigate for irregular or non-attendance.

Confirmed not on a school roll
 Referral to Attendance & Behaviour Service or Minority Communities Achievement Service (MCAS) for investigation and agency checks as appropriate

If the child is subject to a CIN, CP plan or there are other child protection concerns, CSS and the police must be informed.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
 Investigation in accordance with Education Act 1996 Section 444 – parental duty to ensure regular attendance at school. Legal action initiated if appropriate.
 Case closed on CME register

Education Welfare Officer (EWO)/MCAS
 Contact made with parent/carer – completion of In Year Casual Admission form. School place identified and child registers.
 Case closed on CME register

Parents/carers fail to engage
 Attendance & Behaviour service District Manager commences School Attendance Order (SAO) process – Education Act 1996 Section 437.
 Case remains open on CME register until child registers at school

Parents/carers can not be located at given address and all enquiries exhausted.
 Attendance and Behaviour service District Manger agree to removal of pupil from school roll.
 Case remains open on CME register for regular local and national database checks.

Missing from Care

The authority's strategy for managing missing-from-care incidents should be set down in running and missing from home and care protocols agreed with the local police and other partner agencies, including any local voluntary services.

To include:

- agreed categories of absence and definition of missing from local authority care;
- appropriate responses to children and young people who go missing from care, including arrangements for making missing persons reports to the police;
- escalating the approach to intervention with individual children to reduce the likelihood of a child repeatedly going missing;
- agreed reporting and recording systems for local authorities;
- effective reporting and information-sharing between the local authority, the police and other agencies;
- prompt follow-up interviews with young people who go missing; and
- Joint-assessment information which should be used to revise and amend care plans and placement information records (see section on Care Planning). This information should also be made available to Ofsted inspectors.

Children in Care

Planning Ahead for Children in Care

Planning ahead for the possibility of a child / young person going missing is essential, and should form part of the placement plan for the child or young person. Early strategies and proactive support from workers / carers should be in place to encourage children/young people not to go missing.

At the time the child / young person is placed there should be consideration of the likelihood of them going missing and provisional plans made for it becoming a reality. An identified course of action should, in most cases, be clearly laid out in the Placement / Care Plan; this should consider the degree of risk if they do; the parents' views; and the views of the child/young person themselves.

Both foster carers and residential staff should be alert to the potential triggers and signals that a child/young person is considering going missing. They should be proactive at this stage and talk to the child / young person to discover what is wrong and put particular arrangements in place to encourage them to stay at the placement. Workers/carers should never be afraid to assert their authority in a nurturing and caring capacity in order to make the child/young person believe that they are wanted and they will be supported if they stay.

A risk assessment must be completed where children are known to be a risk of running away. The risks should be discussed where appropriate at the placement planning meeting and reflected in the day to day arrangements for the child. The care plan must be updated to reflect all the current circumstances of the child.

Any risks identified should be recorded in the Placement Information Record, a copy of which must be given to the child's carer or other primary carer in their placement at the start of any placement, or

within 72 hours if the placement was made in an emergency.

The risk assessment should consider the following factors:

- Risk factors : Including the risk of harm/vulnerability of the child/young person, or harm posed by the child/young person to others
- The child's view of placement and the likelihood of the child/young person going missing.
- The child's view of going missing and the associated risks
- Risks associated with addresses / locations frequented by the child/young person
- The likelihood of the child/young person being harboured.
- Any previous history of unauthorised absence or missing episodes.
- Trigger incidents
- The degree of risk / harm of the child/young person going missing.
- The level of supervision/support offered to the child/young person.
- The parents' advice on what action they feel should be taken if the child/young person goes missing.
- External influences
- Key information; including description of the child/young person
- Up to date photograph.
- Medical needs.
- Mental health.
- Victim or perpetrator of abuse/offences.
- Previous incidents where young person suffered or was exposed to harm.
- Places of accommodation previously sought.
- Issues of identity, faith, race or cultural background or sexual orientation or gender.

Where considered appropriate the child/young person should be given information about the risks of running away and the actions that will be taken.

Where children do run away from their care placement then their needs should be reassessed and their care plan updated to incorporate a risk management strategy to minimise missing from care incidents.

Children and young people who have absconded from Local Authority Care

Children and young people who are subject to court ordered arrangements, who abscond must be reported to the police as they will then be in breach of these arrangements and may be subject to arrest and detention.

The foster carer / care provider to inform the Fostering Service and/or the child's social worker (or Out of Hours service) that a child has absconded from accommodation.

The foster carer completes an updated risk assessment in conjunction with the child's Social Worker or Out of Hours worker.

Social Worker (or out of hours worker) to inform the Police by contacting (01622- 690690) or the Kent Contact and Assessment Service on (08458 247247), providing information from the placement information record and up dated risk assessment (Risk assessment list pg 19). They should also inform the Youth Offending Service if the young person was subject to remand or other conditions of residence imposed by the Courts.

There should be ongoing communication between the workers of the various agencies to ensure that the young person is located and returned, or other arrangements are put in place for their accommodation if the place where they were accommodated is the cause of their absconding.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence from Local Authority Care

Clearly some children absent themselves for a short period and then return and during their absence their whereabouts was known. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose or accidentally, and may be testing boundaries. This kind of boundary testing is within the range of normal teenage behaviour and not necessarily considered a risk.

Whether the absence is careless or deliberate, if there is no apparent risk for their immediate safety it may fall within the unauthorised absence category. If a child's whereabouts are known then they cannot be 'missing'. Unauthorised absences must be carefully monitored however as the child may subsequently go missing.

For example, in some circumstances young people staying with a friend without prior agreement may not be 'at risk' and it would be inappropriate to flag this event as a missing from care incident or report it to the police.

In situations where a child is absent without permission the first response may be that providers of their care along with any relevant staff from their responsible authority, which could include the child's social worker, should act like a responsible parent and take all practical steps to establish the child's location and to ensure that they return to their placement without delay.

A child who is absent should be classified as unauthorised absence if the criteria below apply:

- They have deliberately or carelessly absented themselves
- They are likely to return of their own accord or they are staying with others known to them
- They are likely to be easily located
- They are unlikely to suffer or cause significant harm whilst absent

The responsibility for managing this type of absence lies with the staff of the residential care home or the foster carer.

Foster carer/care providers will need to consider the following factors as part of the assessment of risk:

- Make a judgement as to whether the child/young person is absent from school without permission and likely to return at the end of the school day or if they have actually gone missing and there are other concerns about their safety.
- Establish with other colleagues/adult members of the household that they are in fact missing without permission.
- Make enquiries to try and find out where the child/young person may have gone. This will probably be done by either a physical search or by phone. Family and friends should be included in this search and after careful consideration it may be necessary to speak with other children/young people in the household.
- Take steps for them to return if their whereabouts are known. This action must never compromise the care of other children/young people or endanger the safety of anyone trying to get them back.
- Consider the previously agreed Care/Placement Plan and risk assessment about what should happen if they go missing.
- Review the current circumstances and decide if the course of action laid out in the care/placement plan is still appropriate.
- Have discussions with their line manager (foster carers can seek advice from the responsible social worker or the out of hours team) about what action to take.

The person's absence must be kept under review and if he/she has not returned within an appropriate time scale it is the social workers responsibility to ensure that the child has been reported as a missing person to the police.

Any unauthorised absence that extends beyond six hours will require the child or young person to be reported as a missing person; however other factors may mean that a decision is taken to report the child/young person as missing prior to this time.

The carer should inform the Social Worker (out of hours worker) who will inform the police by contacting the police force operations room/enquiry centre on 08705 777444 and ask for communications, providing information from the placement information record and up dated risk assessment. (Refer to Risk Assessment list pg 19).

There should be ongoing communication between the workers of the various agencies to ensure that the young person is located and returned, or other arrangements are put in place for their accommodation.

Missing children

For children and young people already known to Kent Children's Social Services (CSS) or the Youth Offending Service (YOS).

For children who are already open to CSS or YOS, it is the responsibility of their lead professional worker to arrange for the Returner Interview to take place.

On determining that the missing child/young person is currently an open case, the Missing Person's Co-ordinator will share any relevant information with KCASS relating to the episode of running away. This information will be entered onto ICS or Careworks as a contact by KCASS and forwarded to the named lead professional from the relevant agency or commissioned service.

Children who go missing when they are subject to a CIN plan or have a LAC status the social worker should ensure that the ICS person details are completed with the date missing and the date they are found. For children with LAC status, the ICS KENT LAC missing from placement exemplar must also be completed. If a child is subject to a CP Plan, Management information (MIU) will complete the person details on ICS. MIU should be informed by e-mail/fax by the safeguarding manager and /or CP coordinator that a child has gone missing with the date missing and the date found. The social worker must complete a Priority 2 Alert (see Alerts procedure) for a child who is subject to a CP, CIN plan or has a LAC status and who is missing.

In addition, for a Kent LAC missing more than 48hrs the responsible district manager must notify the Head of Service, the Director of Specialist Children's services, the Corporate Director of FSC and the Managing director of KCC.

When a child returns it is the responsibility of the lead professional worker to determine how, when and where the Returner Interview should be carried. It may be appropriate that this should be undertaken jointly with the Police. The Returner Interview must be undertaken with the child or young person within 10 working days of their return and should inform any care, child protection or child in need plans in order to reduce the likelihood of the young person running away again.

An internal risk management meeting must be considered were there are unresolved risks or the risks are considered to be very high to the child/young person.

For other Local Authority Looked After Children placed in Kent

For Looked After Children placed by other local authorities, it is the responsibility of the lead professional worker from the placing authority to ensure that the Returner Interview is undertaken. For those young people also known to the Kent YOS, an agreement should be negotiated as to who is best placed to undertake the Returner Interview, but the responsibility for ensuring that it takes place rests with the placing authority.

The Missing Person's Co-ordinator will make contact with the relevant placing local authority to inform them of the return of the child or young person to their placement.

3. Pre-school children

Any pre-school child who is reported to the police as having run away or goes missing and is recorded by the police as such, will meet the eligibility criteria for a referral to children's social services. This should not include children who are reported as being "lost", for example in a shopping centre or on the beach. However, the police will assess the appropriateness of a referral for these children as and when necessary.

Children with three or more incidents of running away.

Any child or young person whose is reported missing three or more times within a twelve month period and who is not currently an open case to CSS or YOS consideration should be given in returner interview/assessment as to whether referral to more specialist service would be appropriate

Children or young people not reported as missing but found to be living away from home.

A small minority of children and young people are not reported missing by their parents or carers but are found to be living in other environments by professionals working with them. For example young people "sofa surfing" because they cannot or do not wish to return home.

In such cases, consideration should be given by the relevant agency to whether or not a referral to CSS should be made. This decision should be taken in consultation with the young person themselves and should be based on an assessment on the young person's vulnerability, need and living circumstances.

- **Private Fostering** .Consideration should be given at all times to whether or not the child is living in a Private Fostering Arrangement and if so a referral made to CSS regardless of the suitability of the placement. ([Private fostering](#)).
- **Child Trafficking**. Agencies should also consider whether or not the child or young found living away from home may be the victim of child trafficking. The use of the Trafficking Tool Kit will assist agencies in identifying such children or young people and to take appropriate action if this is believed to be the case. [Insert web link to Child Trafficking Tool kit.](#)

For Children not currently open to CSS or YOS but who do meet the eligibility criteria for referral.

If the Police Missing Persons Co-ordinator is unsure whether the child is open to CSS or YOS, they will contact KCAS to check if the child is already open. If the child is already open, they should follow the relevant procedure, as above.

On having determined that the runaway child or young person

- a) Is not an open case to Kent CSS or YOS.
- b) Is not an open case to another local authority.
- c) Does not meet the eligibility criteria for referral to CSS.

The Police Missing Person's Co-ordinator will share information about the child or young person relating to

the episode of running away with KCAS. For those children or young people previously known but not currently an open case this information will be entered onto their existing electronic record as a contact only and will not constitute a referral. For those children or young people not previously known, a new electronic record will be created and the information provided as a contact only and will not constitute a referral.

The Police Missing Person's Co-ordinator will then inform the local Preventative Services Manager (PSM) and Early Intervention Co-ordinator in the district where they reside. If the Police have specific information about risks about the family or home address they would share this information with the relevant co-ordinator. The PSM and Co-ordinator will identify which practitioner/agency is best placed to carry out the Return Interview within 10 working days. Consideration must be given by all the agencies as to who is best placed to undertake the Return Interview. If the young person already has a common assessment, the lead professional or another member of the TAC may be best placed to do this.

The practitioner should gain consent from the young person and/or parent/carer to use the Common Assessment as the tool for the return interview and include a risk assessment, as described below. During the discussion, if a parent or child does not want to disclose information in front of each other, they should be given the opportunity to talk with the practitioner separately. The assessment discussion will make sure that the practitioner has a better understanding of the child and family's strengths and needs and what needs to change to improve the situation. Having completed the Return Interview using the common assessment, the assessment should be uploaded to the secure system (Secure Kent Workforce Online, SKWO). This will notify the district Co-ordinator that the assessment has been completed.

Based on the assessment, there are three possible outcomes (1) the assessment discussion has helped to resolve issues/concerns and no further action is necessary, (2) the child and family's needs can be met by a single agency, (3) multi-agency support may be needed. If multi-agency support may be needed, this may be discussed at the Single Point of Access (SPA) meeting (the district CAF Co-ordinator will advise). If multi-agency support is needed a Team Around the Child (TAC) will be formed. The TAC will meet with the child and family to agree the desired outcomes, action plan and identify a lead professional. Progress of the plan should be reviewed regularly

a) Incidents of a child protection nature.

In the event the Police consider that the placement where the child has returned to is not safe, a referral to children's social services following the KSCB procedures will be made immediately. In such circumstances the police will consider whether the child should be taken into Police Protection and will consult with CSS to ensure joint planning to ensure the future safeguarding of the child or young person. This may include seeking an emergency alternative placement for the child or young person whilst further enquiries can be undertaken. When cases of forced marriage and/or honour based violence are considered to be present workers should refer to the published practice guidance. **Insert web link to forced marriage and honour based violence guidance.**

In the event that the police conclude that a criminal offence may have been committed, the appropriate procedures will be followed which will include a referral to CSS for Section 47 investigations. When the police make a child protection referral a strategy meeting will be convened to consider S47 enquiries. Within this framework a plan will be made to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings and will act as the returner interview.

b) Incidents of a Child in Need nature.

In the event that the police identify welfare concerns for a child or young person from the safe and well check they will consult in the first instance with their local Child Abuse Investigation Unit.

If the concerns identified meet the eligibility criteria for a referral to CSS the appropriate procedures for making a referral will be followed. If the concerns do not meet the eligibility criteria, the information will be forwarded to the Missing Person's Coordinator for action.

Risk Assessment

In assessing the significance of any child's absence a risk assessment must be conducted.

Where a child is missing, relevant staff from the Local Authority and Police, must consider the above definitions and take into consideration guidance already agreed on and incorporated into the child's care plan and factors listed below, when assessing risk:-

- The legal status of the person in care (e.g. Emergency Protection Order, Remanded, Curfew conditions etc.
- Previous behaviour patterns. (Such as a history of absence and quick return)
- The child's state of mind/perceived risk. (Is child likely to self-harm or commit suicide? Does child see risks in a balanced way?)
- Group behaviour at the time of the absence.
- Whether the child is perceived as running to someone or running from a situation.
- Any physical or learning disabilities the child may have which increase the risk to them.
- Is the child vulnerable due to age or infirmity or any other factor?
- Is the child suspected to be the victim of a significant crime in progress, e.g. abduction?
- Are there family /relationship problems or recent history of family conflict, including domestic abuse?
- Does the missing person have any physical illness, disability or mental health problems?
- Are they in the company of a person who may cause them harm?
- Do they require essential medication which is not likely to be available?
- Is there ongoing bullying or harassment, e.g. racial, sexual, homophobic or local community concerns and/or cultural issues?
- Do they pose a threat of harm to others?
- Is there drug or alcohol dependency?
- Any other particular circumstances at the time of the incident influencing the risk assessment?
- As a minimum requirement the risk assessment should be reviewed every eight hours and the level of prevailing risk agreed by carers and other professionals responsible for that young person's health safety and well being.

In assessing the risk to the child/young person the risk assessment checklist above provides a framework for determining the risks to the child or young person.

These factors must be considered both in their own right and how they interact with each other, as this will lead to a cumulative evaluation of potential risk(s).

After collecting and analysing the information gathered about these factors the worker/carer should be able to describe the nature of the possible harm; its likelihood of occurring and in what circumstances and then come to a defined level of risk broadly separated into high, medium and low risk. This informed judgement should be clearly conveyed to the police when the missing person's report is made.

It is essential that the categorisation of risk does not remain static while the child/young person is absent. It must be subject to regular and continuous review,

Within this continuous process the risk assessment/management becomes a shared responsibility between the Police, parent/carers, Acute & Complex Services and any other relevant agency or individual.

YOUNG PEOPLE MISSING FROM CARE PROCESS FLOWCHART

Missing

Residential staff / foster carers should make enquiries to locate the missing person with relatives / friends. This should include searches of the accommodation and local area.

Foster carer / residential staff then telephone police with details of the missing person

Details Required

- * Child's name
- * Date of birth
- * Where, when, who missing with?
- * What child was last wearing
- * Description of young person
- * Recent photo
- * Medical history
- * Legal status

All efforts to locate the child / young person must be recorded and auditable

Police



Information Sharing



KCC Risk Assessment

Officers to perform a risk assessment which will form the basis for the resulting proportionate actions

Registered manager of children's home or fostering services to be informed as soon as possible

Sharing of information between the police, parents and other agencies as appropriate

Foster carer / residential staff to notify social worker / team leader

Parents to be informed as agreed

Young person is located or returns to the residence

When a missing child is located, it is the responsibility of foster carers / residential staff to collect the child in the first instance, unless the circumstances pose a risk to them. Where a risk is present, a police officer may be requested to accompany them, or the police maybe requested to collect and return the child / young person to the place of residence

The Police will conduct a Safe and Well Check to establish the missing person's well-being, and to establish whether they were the victims of crime or abuse whilst missing.

Foster carer / residential staff to:

- Provide positive non-judgemental return:
- Check young person's medical condition and make necessary arrangements

Placement staff to inform the social worker and team leader of the young person's return

Arrangements for Return Interview to be agreed in consultation with the child / young person.
Care Plan to be updated

Consider whether to:

- Convene an internal risk management meeting
- Consider with the police whether a Harbourer's warning letter should be issued
- Convene a multi-agency strategy meeting
- Arrange an early looked after child review
- Review any prevention / support work currently being undertaken with the child

Appendix 1

Current Research Findings in Relation to Children Going Missing from Care and Home

The majority of children under the age of 16 who go missing are runaways.

1. Prevalence:

- Research has shown that every year approximately 77,000 under 16s run away overnight.

2. Profiles of the children:

- Peak ages for running away are between 13 and 16 years old and a quarter are under 11 years old. The risk of harm to a child is increased the younger the child is, and the more frequently they run away
- The main causes of running away are family conflicts and personal problems such as relationships, substance misuse, bullying and truancy. Children who run away from care are often unhappy with their placement or are influenced by others and do so to 'fit in' with the group
- Girls are more likely to run away from home than boys, but boys are likely to first run away at an earlier age and to run away more often
- Among children who go missing from care, those assessed as having emotional and behavioural difficulties are a high risk group often. They go missing at a younger age, more often and to stay away longer. They are far more likely to have been excluded from school and to have past convictions for offending than others who go missing

3. Patterns of going missing:

- Four out of five children who run away do so only once or twice
- Twenty percent of children going missing under the age of 16 had been forced to leave home
- Very few children go outside their local area while away
- Children under 16 are most likely to run away because of abuse and neglect. Whilst those who first run away or are forced to leave at the age of 16 or 17 are more likely to do so for reasons of family conflict and breakdown
- Children in residential placements were likely to have gone missing more often in the past than those going missing from foster placements. Children aged 14 and 15 tended to stay away longer
- For children who go missing often, there is a progressive risk of detachment from family, carers and school (exclusion or non-attendance)
- Evidence would suggest that once patterns of school non-attendance and running away become established they are mutually reinforcing
- Children who go missing often are also more likely to have problems with depression, drugs and alcohol and to have involvement in offending
- Children with previous convictions were far more likely to run away than those who had none

4. Reasons for going missing:

- For those who ran away repeatedly, particularly high levels of family problems and disruption were identified.
- Conflict with parents or step-parents is the most common reason 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
- Problems at school are only likely to be a direct trigger for running away for a relatively small minority of children

5. Follow-up Schemes

- Follow-up schemes which:
 - a) Provide children who run away with an opportunity to talk about their reasons for running away, and
 - b) Link children who run away and their families into longer-term help if they need it, have been successful in reducing the numbers of young people who run away repeatedly by up to two-thirds and have also achieved a reduction of one-fifth in the number of runaways arrested

Appendix 2

HELPLINES

Missing People

Missing People provides support for missing children, vulnerable adults and families left in limbo.

Through the Runaway Helpline, the charity provides crisis-support to any young person who has run away from home or care, or been forced to leave. The service is 24/7, free, confidential and can be contacted via Freefone 0808 800 7070, by emailing runaway@missingpeople.org.uk and also by texting 80234.

Missing People also helps local authorities to find young people missing from home or care. The charity can provide liaison and publiCounty opportunities, including national media partners, to aid the safe return of a child.

Missing People accepts referrals from any agency or carer involved with a missing child as long as the case has already been reported to police. A straightforward media consent form will need to be signed by whoever has parental responsibility. To contact Missing People about a missing child, email services@missingpeople.org.uk or call 0871 222 50 55.

Childline

Childline is a free confidential telephone helpline providing counselling service for children and young people run by the NSPCC. The phone number is 0800 1111.

Get Connected

Get Connected is a free, national helpline for any young person under 25 facing any issue, giving each young person the emotional support they need to work out what they want to do about their situation, and the information they need to choose the most appropriate help.

Get Connected holds details of over 13,000 different services and allows the young person to make their own decisions at their own pace. They then connect them, free, to their chosen service. In the case of a young person who has run away or been thrown out of home, they can explore their accommodation options, including friends, family, social services, refuges/hostels or returning home. If the young person wants to find help with any other issues, Get Connected can also put them in touch with services such as counselling, advice, drop-in centres and practical help. www.getconnected.org.uk/charity

Phone: 0808 808 4994 (1pm-11pm every day)

Email: help@getconnected.org.uk

Webchat: www.getconnected.org.uk (7pm-10pm every day)

FRANK

FRANK telephone line and website (www.talktofrank.com) is the joint DCSF, Department of Health and Home Office drugs advice and information campaign for young people: 0800 77 66 00.

Appendix 3 – Kent Police Policy

1. Security protective marking

1.1. Not protectively marked.

2. Summary of changes to policy

2.1. The following changes were made to this policy on 11 August 09:

The policy has been amended to reflect the recognition of vulnerability; missing person reports will be subject to an assessment of vulnerability. This will be conducted by the attending patrol while remaining at the scene. If it is assessed there is no vulnerability the matter will be referred to a Sergeant, and then an Inspector, for consideration while the patrol remains at the scene. If no vulnerabilities are found to exist then Kent Police will decline to instigate a full missing persons investigation, however, details will be retained on command and control to allow resurrection if any further information is revealed.

This policy is due for review in August 2011.

Application

This policy applies to:

all staff involved in missing person investigations.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to offer guidance and instructions to staff dealing with missing persons by outlining the vulnerability assessment and detailing roles and responsibilities of officers and staff throughout the incident.

General

The Human Rights Act 1998 places a positive obligation on police officers to take reasonable action within their powers, to safeguard the rights of individuals who may be at risk. Those rights that may be relevant to missing persons are: the right to life (Article 2. European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)); the right not to be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 3 ECHR); the right to prohibition of slavery and forced labour (Article 4 ECHR); the right to private and family life (Article 8 ECHR) and, the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to receive information (Article 10 ECHR). Failure to thoroughly investigate a report of a missing person may leave an individual at risk and the police service vulnerable to a legal challenge under the Human Rights Act or the law relating to negligence.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of a missing person is:

'Anyone whose whereabouts is unknown, whatever the circumstances of disappearance. They will be considered missing until located and their well-being, or otherwise established.'

[The Guidance on The Management Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2005](#) states that when any missing person is reported to Police then that force will record appropriate details.

If a missing person from another force area is reported to Kent Police then Kent Police will record all practicable details and pass these to the relevant force.

Roles and responsibilities on the Basic Command Unit (BCU)

Senior Management Teams (SMT) have a responsibility to ensure missing person investigations are provided appropriate support and allocation of suitable resources. Missing person investigations must be afforded sufficient importance within other policing priorities.

SMT will nominate a Chief Inspector to have overall responsibility for missing person investigations with a Missing Person Coordinator having responsibility for over-seeing and assisting with such investigations.

The daily Tasking and Coordinating Group (T&CG) will consider all outstanding missing person investigations and determine appropriate resourcing and supervision levels.

Duty Managers have overall responsibility for individual missing person investigations. In certain high-risk cases this could be a Detective Inspector or above. An Inspector (TCU Insp/Duty Manager) will report to the daily T&CG information relating to all outstanding missing person investigations.

Guidance on the Management Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2005

This policy reflects the Guidance on the Management Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2005 produced on behalf of ACPO by the National Centre for Policing Excellence.

The Guidance on the Management Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2005 will be referred to by officers and staff engaged in missing person investigations.

Protocols

Kent Police have agreed protocols relating to missing person investigations with external agencies. When available, particular reference will be made to the following protocols; -

- Children Missing from Foster and Residential Care and from Home - Kent Social Services and Medway Social Services (see paragraph 19)
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service (see paragraph 28.3)

Particular note should be made of the fact that all 'non-KCC' foster carers and care settings should comply with these protocols if they are operating within the Kent Police area. (See paragraph 19.3.3.)

Responsible Basic Command Unit/Cross Border Investigations

Responsible BCU

The 'Responsible BCU' is defined as the BCU in Kent that conducts the missing person investigation.

It is probable in most cases, the BCU where the person has been reported missing will be the 'Responsible BCU'. However, there will be occasions when the person has gone missing on a BCU where they do not normally reside.

The place the missing person was last seen will probably generate the majority of the fast time enquiries; therefore, when a person is reported missing in a different BCU to that in which they normally reside, the BCU where the person has gone missing will take the initial report. However, if the incident has been reported by a person remote from the last sighting this person will be seen and the initial

report taken from them. In any case, police should attend the location where the person was last seen. Kent Police will always assist other Forces in obtaining a Misper1 as soon as possible, if requested.

The emphasis must be on establishing the BCU best placed to trace the missing person. If it is considered necessary the investigation will be transferred to another BCU. At some point during the initial police attendance (or soon after) an Inspector on each BCU will make a joint decision on who is the 'Responsible BCU'.

In extreme situations where this is not possible, the matter should be referred to a BCU Chief Inspector, or Senior Detective Officer during weekends and bank holidays.

Cross Border Investigations

Similar considerations must be made as above (9.1.2 and 9.1.4 ante). The emphasis must be on establishing which force is best placed to trace the missing person.

The police force that receives the initial report should obtain details and carry out the initial investigation. When this has been completed and where appropriate, the investigation should be transferred to the other police force.

In Kent, all enquiries should be recorded on the Misper1 (form 1207) including the reasons the investigation is best placed in another force. Supporting statements should be obtained if appropriate. A formal request should then be sent by an Inspector or above to the other force via email to ensure an audit trail is maintained. A Chief Inspector should be informed if the matter cannot be resolved at this level. If resolution can still not be achieved then the matter should be referred to the HQ, PPU. [Click here for flow chart guidance.](#)

Where a person has been abducted in one force area and abandoned in another, particularly following homicide, then unless there are cogent reasons to the contrary, the force in whose area the abduction took place should be in command of the investigation (ACPO/NCPE Guidance).

Potential links to serious offences

Some offences, e.g. abduction or murder, may initially be reported as a missing person. The initial stages of any missing person enquiry should commence on the basis that the case may escalate into a serious crime enquiry.

Some examples of missing person related crimes are given below.

Homicide

One of the fundamental facts to be determined in a missing person investigation is the reason why the subject has disappeared. In cases where the circumstances are suspicious or are unexplained, use the maxim: If in doubt think murder.

For further guidance/information see the ACPO Murder Investigation Manual.

Kidnap/Abduction

Always consider the possibility of kidnap/abduction whilst investigating a report of a missing person. Where this is suspected the Duty Inspector, Force Communication Centre (FCC) must be informed immediately.

Child Abuse

Children reported missing from their home, or from care may have been exposed to physical, sexual or moral danger and may have gone missing to avoid abuse.

All reports of missing children will be brought to the attention of the local Public Protection Unit (PPU), Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) DS with responsibility for Child Abuse investigations. The seriousness of the matter will dictate whether this should be immediate. A decision will be made by the PPU CAIU DS whether a case requires a referral to social services in accordance with s.17 or s.47.

Sexual Exploitation

Missing persons, particularly children, may have been the victims of sexual exploitation.

Where there is any suspicion of a case of sexual exploitation involving a child (<18 years) the PPU and SB JIU will be notified. In all other cases a crime group supervisor will be notified. The seriousness of the matter will dictate whether this should be immediate.

Domestic Abuse

A Domestic Abuse officer must be made aware of cases when a victim of domestic violence (past or present) or suspect/offender (past or present) is reported missing. The seriousness of the matter will dictate whether this should be immediate.

Human Trafficking

If information gathered from a missing person investigation indicates involvement in trafficking a Crime Group Supervisor should be informed at the earliest opportunity. Intimation should also be made to the Missing Person Coordinator, PPU, HQ and SB JIU.

Forced Marriage

The PPU or a Crime Group Supervisor should be informed at the earliest opportunity where this is suspected.

Asylum Seekers or Refugees

Reports of missing asylum seekers or refugees will be taken in the same manner as any other report. Children are particularly vulnerable in such circumstances. The joint protocol between Kent and Medway Social Services and Kent Police relating to missing children from care should be followed.

The stated age of any unaccompanied asylum seeking child should be respected until they are lawfully age assessed by Social Services. Kent Police will assume the individual's age is correct until the contrary is stated by social services.

If, after recording details of an individual stating their age to be under 16 the age is lawfully proven by social services to be incorrect, Kent Police will fully record the details of who has made this assessment (name, position within social services, contact details and case reference number).

Social Services have been charged by central Government to conduct these formal age assessments and any other individual or organisation cannot lawfully undertake this process.

In cases where there are concerns regarding this process the matter should be referred to the HQ, PPU.

Management and recording of vulnerable missing persons

Reports of missing persons are made to police in a variety of circumstances. Most reports are initially received through the FCC via the telephone system. Whatever the manner of initial approach to police, the FCC shall be informed. They will commence a STORM log of the incident.

All reports of a missing person will be attended by Kent Police to assess the level of vulnerability.

Where vulnerability exists then a MISPER 1 form will be completed by the first officer to attend the incident

STORM logs will remain open to manage the initial phase of the investigation. It is for an Inspector to decide when it is more appropriate to continue the investigation on:

- The action log on the MISPER 1(form 1207);
- Or commence a Policy File and Action Book

Each case will be judged on its merits.

The MISPER 1 form is a word document and will be used in its electronic format.

The MISPER 1 may be printed-off to use as an aide memoir, or as back up in the case of computer system failure.

All decisions made throughout the enquiry must be documented in detail. This includes any policy decision as to why certain lines of enquiry were or were not pursued, as the case may be.

The MISPER 1 will be used to raise and result specific actions and document all reviews (unless a policy file and action book has been adopted).

Day to day ownership of the investigation will remain with the relevant DM or DI if applicable, whilst the nominated Chief Inspector will retain overall responsibility for all missing persons.

During the course of an investigation, additional paperwork may be generated in the form of statements or other documents. In such cases the MISPER 1 should reflect the location of these documents and a summary of the information they provide.

All paperwork must be filed in accordance with local instructions to ensure compliance with the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA).

For intelligence purposes, where there is an existing GENESIS nominal record for the missing person, BCU personnel will update the information section with the circumstances of the missing episode. This is particularly important with regards to children.

Initial reporting

Reports of missing persons can be made to the police in a number of ways; the vast majority will be by telephone. In all cases, missing person reports will be notified as soon as possible to the FCC.

The role of the FCC Operator (or BCU personnel) is not just to record details. No assumptions should be made about the priority of police action until detailed and accurate information has been obtained from the person reporting. This information should include an initial assessment of the status of the person making the report, e.g. boyfriend, parent, friend, or third party.

Resourcing Assessment

The FCC Operator will make a resourcing assessment that will determine the level of the initial police response. The following checklist will be used. If the answer to any of the following questions is yes, the identification of risk may be high and the advice of a FCC Team Leader should be sought immediately:

- Is there any information that the person is likely to cause serious self-harm or attempt suicide?
- Is the person suspected to be victim of a crime in progress, e.g. abduction? Is the person particularly vulnerable due to age, infirmity, or any other factor?
- Are there inclement weather conditions that would seriously increase risk to health, particularly where the missing person is a child or elderly person? Does the missing person need essential medication or treatment not readily available to them?
- Does the missing person have any serious physical illness, disability or mental health problems?
- Is it believed that the person may not have the ability to interact safely with others or in an unknown environment?
- Has the person been involved in a violent, homophobic and/or racist incident or confrontation immediately prior to disappearance?
- Has the person been the subject of bullying immediately prior to disappearance?
- Has the person previously been a missing person AND suffered or was exposed to serious harm?
- Is the behaviour out of character and likely to be an indicator of their being exposed to serious harm?

Information required at the time of the initial report

Minimum information to be recorded by the FCC Operator (or BCU personnel) when taking the initial report:

- Name;
- Age, date of birth;
- Gender
- EthniCounty
- Home address;
- Location missing from;
- Circumstances of going missing;
- Is this behaviour out of character?
- Details of any vehicle or other transport used;
- Assessment of the person reporting;
- Name, address and telephone number of person reporting;
- Mobile telephone number of missing person;

- Legal status of person, e.g. is the person in the care of an external agency? Consider if a protocol applies.

In addition to the above for High Risk Cases

Description of person;

- Description of clothing.
- Initial descriptions for high-risk cases should provide sufficient information for an active investigation to commence prior to the full descriptive detail being obtained by the first officer to attend the report:
- Hair length
- Hair style
- Facial hair
- Build
- Ethnic appearance
- Height
- Visible marks/scars/tattoos/physical peculiarities
- Distinctive clothing/jewellery

All missing person reports shall be drawn to the attention of a FCC Team Leader at the earliest opportunity.

The FCC Team Leader will verify the initial report and resourcing assessment.

The FCC Team Leader must ensure all missing person reports are brought to the attention of the BCU Patrol Sergeant. In high-risk cases this should be immediately along with the FCC Inspector and BCU Inspector.

When appropriate, Critical Incident Inspectors (CII) will be informed of all outstanding high-risk missing persons. This should be completed by the FCC Supervisor.

If high-risk, consideration should be given to whether the case is declared as a "critical incident". (see policy M02 and M118).

All reports of missing persons should be resourced within 4 hours of the initial report.

Further FCC actions

If the resourcing assessment classifies the missing person as high-risk, the FCC will complete appropriate fast time actions. For example, Police National Computer (PNC) circulation, enquiries with other forces and agencies, etc., (including, when appropriate, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)). Each case will be judged on its merits.

If the initial patrol attending believes risk assessment for the missing person is high-risk; the FCC Inspector may authorise fast time actions on behalf of the BCU concerned, which may include PNC circulation (see para 23 post).

Once beyond the initial stage of the enquiry, or for all medium and low risk investigations, it is the responsibility of the relevant BCU to conduct inter-BCU, inter-force and agency enquiries.

All actions raised and completed by the FCC will be recorded on the appropriate STORM record. The BCU Patrol Sergeant will be made aware of actions undertaken at the FCC.

Classification of risk and response

The table below sets out the definition of each category and what each category means in terms of operational response:

HIGH RISK

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

This category requires the prompt deployment of police resources.

Such cases should lead to the appointment of an SIO (uniform or crime unit) and possibly a PoISA and FLO.

There should be a media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies.

A member of the BCU Senior Management Team should be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels.

MEDIUM RISK

The risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.

This category requires an active and measured response by police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting

LOW RISK

There is no apparent threat of danger to either the subject or the public

In addition to recording the information on the PNC, the police will advise the person reporting the disappearance that following basic enquiries and unless circumstances change, police will not carry out further active enquiries.

The missing person's details will be passed to the Missing Persons Bureau, NPIA

Low risk missing persons, however, must be kept under review as risk can increase with the passage of time.

First officer to attend

All missing person reports will be initially attended by a police officer. The first officer to attend a report of a missing person has to make judgements that will significantly affect the progress of the investigation. That officer must understand they are conducting an investigation, not merely taking details for a report. Consideration must be given to the nature of the report being taken; bearing in mind this might be the first report of a serious crime or indication of a person being at significant risk of serious harm.

Responsibilities of the first Officer attending a report of a missing person

The responsibilities of the first officer attending a report of a missing person are:

- Establish the facts and keep accurate records of what was said and by whom;
- Make an initial risk assessment based upon the circumstances of the disappearance and the risks to which that person or the community are likely to be exposed. The decision, the evidence supporting it and where the information came from should be recorded;
- Gather sufficient information about the missing person to enable an effective and thorough investigation to be conducted. The depth of that information will vary according to the assessment of risk. Very detailed information and a lifestyle profile will be needed in high –risk cases;
- Notify a supervisor immediately in high-risk cases;
- Conduct a search of the premises and its environs;
- Make all immediate relevant enquiries in order to locate the missing person;
- Consider obtaining any physical evidence of identity such as recent photographs, fingerprints, DNA samples;
- Identify the person who is the point of contact for the police and assess levels of support required;
- Complete and leave with appropriate person an informant handout (1207b);
- Complete consent form (1207a)
- Complete a MISPER 1 (missing person report – form 1207). Missing person reports must not be left until the missing person coordinator is available to complete this task.

14.3. Risk assessment decision making guide

14.3.1. The factors listed below are a decision making guide to assist a professional judgement of the risk level. These are only a guide and other grounds for concern/suspicion, even if intuitive, should be noted by the investigator or reviewing officer:

- Is the person vulnerable due to age or infirmity or any other factor?
- Behaviour that is out character is often a strong indicator of risk; are the circumstances of going missing different from normal behaviour patterns?
- Is the person suspected to be the victim of a significant crime in progress, e.g. abduction?
- Is there any indication that the person is likely to commit suicide?
- Is there a reason for the person to go missing?
- Are there any indications that preparations have been made for their absence?
- What was the person intending to do when last seen, e.g., going to the shops or catching a bus and did they fail to complete their intentions?

- Are there family and/or relationship problems or recent history of family conflict including abuse?
- Are they the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence?
- Does the missing person have any physical illness, disability or mental health problems?
- Are they on the Child Protection Register?
- Do they need essential medication that is not likely to be available to them?
- Is there a belief that the person may not have the physical ability to interact safely with others or an unknown environment?
- Ongoing bullying or harassment, e.g. racial, sexual, homophobic or local community concerns and/or cultural issues?
- Were they involved in a violent and/or racist incident immediately prior to disappearance?
- Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to serious harm?
- School, college, university, employment or financial problems?
- Drug or alcohol dependency?
- Other unlisted factors which the officer or supervisor considers would influence risk assessment?
- Is the individual being cared for by foster carers or a residential home?

The importance and relevance of any of the above will depend on the circumstances of each case. Investigators must be mindful that the risk assessment is a subjective judgment, and that one factor alone may be considered so important as to prompt an urgent response.

When making a risk assessment, the information that leads to the determination of the level of risk must be recorded. The origins of this information must also be recorded and researched including if the person giving the information may have other motives, or is not in full possession of the facts.

If considered as high-risk consideration should be given to whether the case is declared as a critical incident. (refer to policy [M02](#) and [M118](#)).

Recording and Management of non-vulnerable persons reported as missing

Kent Police will attend the scene and assess the level of vulnerability. This is imperative to allow officers to properly investigate the matter and accurately assess whether there is a vulnerability surrounding the person reported as missing. If the attending officer believes there to be no vulnerability present then the details will be recorded and whilst remaining at the scene the circumstances will be relayed to a Sergeant.

On receipt of information from a patrol that the assessment is that no vulnerabilities exist, the Sergeant should use this as an opportunity to assist in, and direct, the investigation to satisfy the assessment or not. If the Sergeant makes a decision that a vulnerability surrounding the reported person **does** exist then the details will be recorded and the situation will be dealt with as per paragraph 11, management and recording of vulnerable missing persons.

If the Sergeant concurs there to be no vulnerabilities present then this will be relayed to an Inspector or above for a final decision whilst the patrol remains at the scene. The inspector should also use this as an opportunity to assist in, and direct, the investigation to satisfy the assessment or not. If the Inspector makes a decision that a vulnerability surrounding the reported person **does** exist then the situation will be dealt with as per paragraph 11, management and recording of vulnerable missing persons.

If the Inspector decides that no vulnerability exists then the following action should take place:

The officers at the scene should thank the informant but explain that the attending circumstances do not warrant Kent Police instigating a full missing person investigation, however, the matter will be retained on Storm and can be re-assessed if any circumstances change. The informant should then be left with the Storm reference number, the FCC contact number and the officer's details. The officer should, on returning to the Police station, complete an e-form to allow the person to be circulated on PNC as a locate/trace.

The Inspector must cause the Storm record to be annotated with their identifying details and a rationale for the assessment that there is no vulnerability present.

The age of the person reported as missing should not automatically render that person as vulnerable. The age combined with a reduced ability to integrate or to make judgements, for example, would provide for vulnerability. All assessments should be undertaken on an individual basis. The issue of vulnerability is a subjective assessment with the final decision providing a consensus of opinion between the attending officer, the sergeant and the inspector. The rationale for arriving at this decision should be recorded by those three officers.

Investigative issues to consider

The following issues should be considered when taking the initial report and throughout the life of the investigation.

Missing persons can be categorised within one of the following groups:

- **Lost Person:** This is a person who is temporarily disorientated and would wish to be found, e.g. someone who has gone walking and does not know where they are;
- **Missing person who has voluntarily gone missing:** This is someone who has control over their actions and who has decided upon a course of action, e.g. wishes to leave home or commit suicide.

Such factors will enable the investigating officer to establish the priority of lines of enquiry and determine the appropriate resources required. Remember, if in doubt; think the worst until the contrary is proved.

Search and evidence gathering

The first officer to attend a missing person report will be responsible for ensuring a search is made of the persons address and any other relevant premises or locations. The objectives of the search are to discover:

- The missing person;
- Evidence relating to their disappearance;
- Intelligence that may lead to their discovery.

If the search involves hazardous areas then consideration must be given to the protection of those involved and the risk must be assessed.

Search should be considered in three phases:

Frequently a missing person, well or otherwise, is still near their place of residence. A routine search should always be made of their place of residence and immediate area. The second level of search is hasty but thorough. This involves making an assessment from what the initial enquiry has discovered as to the most likely circumstances of their disappearance and then searching with maximum coverage according to those circumstances using untrained BCU staff and possibly the public. The third level of search applies when the first two have failed and involves fully managed, scenario based, systematic searching of all likely locations to a high level of assurance using only search trained teams.

Detailed information regarding the normal behaviour patterns for various Special Population Groups are contained in the Grampian Search Guide.

An immediate search should examine any records, which might reveal motives and lifestyle information.

Serious consideration in high risk cases should be given to capturing physical evidence (particularly for DNA) that might assist in the identification of recovered bodies or future enquiries into homicide.

Reference material such as a toothbrush, hairbrush, razor or soap belonging to the missing person can be considered as suitable for DNA capture. Investigative effort must be made to establish, as far as possible, the link between the seizure/recovery of any items and the missing person. Consider the following:

- Has the item been used solely by the missing person?
- Has it been used recently and/or frequently?
- Is there visible biological material (e.g. dandruff)?

Advice should be sought from the on call CSI if DNA is to be seized.

The permission of the next of kin will be required to seize this reference material and this permission should be recorded.

When the reference material is seized the following action must be undertaken:

- Record details in the Special Property Register. Any item seized must be correctly packaged. Items seized for DNA must be stored in a freezer.
- Cross-reference the material to the missing person report.
- If the reference material is not to be considered for loading onto the National DNA Database it is to be stored at the police station and retained for 10 weeks

If the missing person returns within that 10-week period the reference material is to be either returned to the person or destroyed. A relevant person should be informed of any destruction.

If unidentified remains are found and there is a possibility they may come from the missing person then reference material collected from the remains by the pathologist should be compared with the reference material thought to belong to the missing person (i.e. seized as above).

It would be prudent at an early stage for officers to conduct a PNC Check on the missing person in order to check if they have been 'DNA Confirmed'.

PolSA (Police Search Advisor)

If it is unlikely the missing person will be found by an immediate search and there is evidence that the person is at risk of serious harm the Inspector leading the investigation should consider requesting specialist support from a PolSA.

A PolSA will provide advice and guidance on a range of search strategies and act as a link between other agencies, e.g. Voluntary Search and Rescue Teams and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

[Protocol between Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service.](#)

Media strategy

If publiCounty though the media is to be part of the investigation, it should be done in consultation with the family of the missing person. Occasionally the family will object to this, however their consent is not needed, provided the decision is made in consideration of the Human Rights Act and is carried out proportionately and is perceived to be in the best interest of the missing person. The use of any such strategy will be the decision of the SIO or Duty Manager as appropriate.

A media strategy must be developed in high profile cases. Its twin objectives will be to generate information and public awareness to assist the enquiry and to control speculation.

The charity Missing People, through the National Protocol Agreement, will offer their considerable resources and services in locating the missing person. This includes publiCounty. It is possible to contact the charity prior to their offer regarding publiCounty and this can be achieved via the local Missing Person Coordinator of the HQ, PPU.

The Kent Police Website may be used to highlight specific missing person investigations. Liaise with the BCU Press Officer in the first instance.

Guidelines relating to media strategy for critical incidents and major crimes can be found in the ACPO Murder Investigation Manual or refer to The Guidance on the Management Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2005.

Mobile phones

If the missing person has access to a mobile phone then consideration may be given to requesting a live cell trace. This will generally only be done in the most serious of circumstances and guidance should be sought from FIB Intel who provide a dedicated SpoC in relation to the subject.

In less serious cases consideration may be given to utilising historic cell phone data which may provide an indication of where the missing person has been. This may also be considered in the more serious cases.

Family Liaison Support

Consideration should be given on how to provide support to the family and friends of the missing person. This may be necessary at an early stage to:

- Support and clarify the ongoing enquiry;
- Gain extra information about the missing person;
- Ensure police are informed when the person returns or is found.

Sightings

For further guidance refer to The Guidance on the Management Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2005.

Supervision and management of investigations by Basic Command Units

Reviews

The purpose of any review is to:

- Review the risk assessment;
- Check for any outstanding or incomplete actions;
- Quality assure actions already taken;
- Set new actions and lines of enquiry;
- Decide the ownership of the investigation until next review;
- Set times for further reviews.

Any decision to reduce or raise the level of risk at any time during an investigation should be endorsed by an Inspector or above.

Decisions should be recorded, showing what is being done, or not being done as the case may be. A reviewing officer does not necessarily take ownership of the investigation. Investigations do not necessarily stop whilst a review is in progress.

Initial Review

The first attending officer's initial risk assessment must be checked and verified by a Patrol Sergeant. A Patrol Sergeant should also assess the initial information gathering and if necessary instigate further enquiries to validate the initial risk assessment.

An Inspector (probably a Duty Manager) must conduct an initial review of all missing person reports as soon as possible.

A Detective Inspector should be made aware of all high-risk investigations within 24 hours of the initial report.

Subsequent reviews

Following the initial review phase, the minimum requirement for reviews will be as follows:

First 7 days

High risk

An Inspector every 8 hours.
A Detective Inspector after 12 hours
A Detective Chief Inspector at 7 days

Medium risk

An Inspector at point of hand-over, (usually the commencement of a shift).
A Detective Sergeant after 48 hours

Low risk

An Inspector every 24 hours (prior to T&CG)
A Detective Sergeant after 48 hours

Following 8 –28 Days

High risk

An Inspector every 8 hours.
A Detective Chief Inspector at 28 days

Medium risk

An Inspector at point of hand-over, usually the commencement of a shift.
A Chief Inspector at 28 days.

Low risk

An Inspector every 24 hours (prior to T&CG)
A Chief Inspector at 28 days

BCU Tasking and Coordinating Group (T&CG)

Overarching all the review process will be the daily T&CG that will consider all outstanding missing person investigations and determine appropriate resourcing and supervision/management levels.

Decisions made at the T&CG will be recorded on the MISPER 1 (or policy file if used).

Long term investigations

A Chief Inspector should instigate reviews every 28 days for the first 3 months, then at 6 months and 12 months intervals, then annually thereafter. This may be delegated to an Inspector. A Detective Chief Inspector should continue to review the case if the investigation raises particular concern for the missing person.

Multi-agency review

An individual is to be classified as a repeat missing person if they are reported as missing 3 times or more in a consecutive 3 month period.

Any child or adult subject to any third party interest (such as social services, private care homes, etc) who is classified as a repeat missing person should be subject to a multi agency review at the earliest opportunity.

The BCU is responsible for identifying their 'Top10' repeat missing persons who are responsible for a disproportionate resource abstraction for that BCU. The 'Top10' should be provided to HQ PPU to assist with quality control.

When any person identified as a 'Top 10' repeat missing person is subject to a missing person report a multi agency review should be arranged.

All children reported as missing for over 7 days must be subject to a multi agency review. Where appropriate external agencies should be involved in the review process, for example where the subject of the missing person report falls into the remit of PPU work i.e. Child Abuse, Adult Abuse, Domestic Abuse or Public Protection. The content of any discussion or meeting should be recorded.

Multi Agency Reviews will be arranged on the direction of the BCU CAIU and should be used to explore ways to support the individual to reduce the frequency of being reported as missing.

Multi Agency Reviews can also be used to clarify the responsibilities of all parties concerned and material agreements should be recorded on the misper1 (if appropriate) and on Genesis (this could include arrangements for collection, where the child will be taken to, etc).

Multi Agency Reviews will be coordinated by a CAIU Supervisor within that BCU.

It is accepted the forum for such discussions or meetings may form part of an already established structure e.g. strategy discussions or child protection conferences.

Ownership of investigation

Ownership of all open cases will remain with the DM (or DI if assumed by crime group).

The DM may allocate the task of investigation to other individuals however they will retain ownership until handed over to the next DM.

Interview on return from missing or found

The investigation is not concluded until the missing person has been finally interviewed. In exceptional circumstances a Superintendent or above may authorise the case to be closed without this interview (Refer to 15.7. and the 2005 Guidance).

Police need not necessarily conduct these interviews. If the person is unlikely to be forthcoming to Police then other appropriate facilitators may be considered, e.g. social worker, foster carer, youth worker, Police staff, etc, who can conduct the interview and then report the findings back to police.

The MISPER 1 will be completed in all cases and if applicable any GENESIS record updated.

Missing person investigations should not be closed without the person first being seen by police and a check made on the health and welfare of the person.

This is an important process and should be viewed as an opportunity to obtain potentially valuable intelligence, in particular to stop further reoccurrences. It is an opportunity to disclose any offending behaviour by, or against the person whilst missing, or the causes of why they went missing in the first place.

Particular consideration must be afforded to the case if notification of missing persons whereabouts to family or associates may put the missing person at risk e.g. investigations involving domestic violence, forced marriages etc. If any adult does not wish their whereabouts to be disclosed the person reporting them missing should be told the missing person has been located and reassure them about their wellbeing.

In circumstances where the missing person has been located but it is impractical to see them due to their present circumstances, e.g. gone abroad or deliberately making themselves unavailable to police, the investigation can be closed provided that the written authority of a Superintendent is given.

The Inspector reviewing the investigation at the relevant time will ensure all relevant external agencies are notified the missing person has been found, e.g. missing people etc.

Missing children

A child is any person who is (or believed to be by the authorities, e.g. asylum seekers) under the age of 18 years.

The majority of missing person reports in Kent involve children. It should be the aim of individual policing areas to seek to reduce the number of instances of children going missing.

[A protocol for children missing from foster and residential care and from home.](#)

Children are placed into care in Kent by either Kent Social Services, Medway Social Services, or as frequently the case, by external agencies into the independent care/fostering sector.

A Protocol between Kent Police and Kent Social Services and Medway Social Services has been agreed. This protocol is divided into three Sections: -

Section A	–	Missing from Care
Section B	–	Missing from Home
Section C – Legal Framework		

It is important to note Section A of the protocol specifically relates to children placed into the care of Kent Social Services and Medway Social Services however, does cover children placed into the independent care/fostering sector by external Social Services. The care status of the missing child must be established at an early stage of the investigation. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) expects the entire care/fostering sector in Kent should follow the guidance in the Protocol.

Section B relates to the process of referrals to Kent or Medway Social Services when children go ‘missing from home’ in Kent.

A policing area may have a concern regarding the frequency of children going missing from a particular independent foster home or carer. If they or the child are not subject to the above protocol, local

arrangements should be sought between police and the foster home/carer to reduce the frequency and associated risks.

The Detective Superintendent PPU, FHQ will be informed of issues relating to the use of the Protocol in Kent.

Click here to view the [A protocol for children missing from foster and residential care and from home.](#)

Police National Computer (PNC) and Schengen

PNC

PNC Bureau will be notified of missing persons. This will be an automatic process (by e-mail) once the MISPER 1 has been completed in the first instance.

FCC will notify PNC Bureau of high-risk cases immediately where the FCC Inspector considers it necessary.

After 20 days the Dental Chart will be obtained and forwarded to the PNC Bureau.

When the missing person is located/returned the PNC Bureau will be automatically notified (by e-mail) once the MISPER 1 has been finalised.

It is the responsibility of the Inspector reviewing the investigation to ensure the PNC Bureau has been notified within 24 hours of the initial report or when the missing person has been found/located.

Schengen – European Union Area

The creation of missing person alerts on the Schengen Information System (SIS) will happen automatically when a PNC circulation is made. The PNC operator in the PNC Bureau will have to classify the missing person under one of the following groups: -

- a) Juvenile in need of protection or who poses a threat – all juvenile missing persons.
- b) Adult in need of protection or who poses threat – all those assessed as being high and medium risk.
- c) Adult not in need of protection and not posing a threat – all other missing persons.

a) and b) cover those people in the UK and within the member states where action is requested, within national legislation to protect the individual either in their own interests or in order to protect others.

b) covers humanitarian issues. Where a person disappears but is not considered to be in need of protection or posing a threat the requested action is to relay the fact that the person has been found.

c) Their current address is also requested but may only be given if the missing person consents to it being divulged to the country issuing the alert.

The PNC operator should indicate two identifying marks on the SIS alert from the description provided of the missing person.

If a person is assessed as being high risk and thought to have travelled outside the Schengen/EU area, consideration should be given to an Interpol circulation.

NPIA Missing Persons Bureau (NPIA MPB)

The PNC Bureau must send notification of all outstanding missing persons to the NPIA MPB within fourteen days. Notification to the PNC Bureau will be made by the BCU Missing Persons Coordinator. Information will be sent sooner if a case warrants urgent attention.

The NPIA MPB should be advised immediately if the missing person is a foreign national. The NPIA MPB should also be notified at once where a missing UK resident is believed to have travelled abroad.

Missing people

Missing People are a charitable organization and are very useful service to assist officers, at no cost, engaged in missing person investigations. They will be used whenever the need arises. Contact No 0208 392 4545.

They provide counseling service for missing persons and families and have extensive access to media networks and publications.

Under the terms of the National Protocol Agreement (NPA) forces will inform Missing People of High risk cases as soon as practicable and Medium risk cases within 72 hours. This can be done via the electronic misper1.

Missing from Care (MfC)

Missing People run a Missing from Care (MfC) service. It has wide experience in helping to resolve missing person investigations on behalf of local authorities across the country.

MfC will accept referrals from anyone involved with the missing child.
Contact No 020 8392 4527. E-mail mfc@missingpeople.org Fax 020 8392 4529.

Guidance

[Aide memoir - search techniques and places to search](#)
[Guidance on the management recording and investigation of missing persons 2005](#)
[Protocol between Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service](#)

30.2 [Attached](#) is the latest equality impact assessment that forms part of the policy review process.

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