

**WSCB**

# **Children Missing From Home or Care**

**Joint Protocol**



## Foreword

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on Local Authorities and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local Authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from home, care or education.

***Children may run away from a problem, such as abuse or neglect at home, or to someone they want to be. They may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason, it is thought that approximately 25% of children that go missing are at risk of serious harm. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. Missing children may also be vulnerable to other forms of exploitation, to violent crime, gang exploitation or to drug and alcohol misuse.***

(Department for Education; statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, Jan 2014.)

The following procedure has been created to provide a seamless, innovative and multi-agency response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home, care or education. This Joint Protocol is important for the safeguarding of children and families in Wigan, 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, Care and Education.

The protocol was drafted jointly by, the Missing from Home / Care Sub Group of Wigan Safeguarding Children Board, and was ratified by WSCB on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This incorporates the DFE statutory Guidance and also 'Children Missing From Home and Care; A Standardised Approach to Dealing with Missing and Absent Children and Young People Across Greater Manchester'.

If you believe that a young person is at immediate risk this should be reported without delay to the police service as a 999 emergency. Concern that children and young people may be at risk of significant harm, but who are not in immediate danger should be relayed to the Children's Duty Team on 01941828300. Out of working hours contact can be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 01942 828777. Telephone referrals made by professionals should be followed up within 48 hours with a written professional referral form, which can be found on the WSCB website.

[www.wiganlscb.com](http://www.wiganlscb.com)

## Contents

Foreword.....	2
1 Introduction .....	4
2 Background .....	5
3 Wigan Council Principals.....	6
4 Key Principles .....	7
5 National Guidance .....	8
6 Local Guidance, policy and procedure.....	9
7 Definitions.....	10
8 Services in Wigan .....	11
9 Responses to children missing from home or care .....	13
10 Intelligence and Prevention .....	15
11 Children who repeatedly run away and go missing; intervention strategies.....	17
12 Notification and Escalation .....	18
13 Recording and Reporting .....	19
14 Monitoring .....	20
Appendices:.....	21
Appendix a: Missing From Care Risk Assessment and Action Plan .....	22
Appendix b: Pathway for children not known / open to Social Care .....	27
Appendix c: Pathway for children subject of Statutory Social Care Intervention .....	28
Appendix d: Pathway for Looked After Children placed in Wigan by Other Local Authority ...	29
Appendix e: Return Home Interview.....	30
Appendix f: Children Missing from Home or Care: Monthly Missing Meeting .....	32

## 1 Introduction

The following has been created to provide a joined up multi agency response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home, care and education.

This protocol is a localised version of that used across the Greater Manchester 'Children missing from home and care – a standardised approach to dealing with missing and absent children and young people across Greater Manchester'. This provides a framework for a co-ordinated, standardised and effective response by Local Authorities, Police and partners in Greater Manchester.

It also has been written incorporating the Department for Education statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014).

This protocol is published by Wigan SCB and is based on the following legislative guidance.

- Children act 1989 guidance and regulations Vol 1, 4.88, 4.91.
- Children Act 1989, Section 49, 50, 51.
- Children Act 2004, section 10 (1) (2)
- DfE statutory Guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care – January 2014.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.
- Wigan Council Child Protection Procedures
- Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked – 2011

This guidance should not be read in isolation and the additional guidance as outlined above should be considered. This guidance is particularly significant when working with missing children who are at risk of:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic Abuse
- Self-Harm
- Involvement in criminal activity of substance misuse
- Children with disabilities
- Trafficking
- FGM
- Forced Marriage
- Radicalisation
- Extremism

## 2 Background

These procedures are designed to provide a framework for a co-ordinated, standardised and effective response by Wigan Council, police and partner agencies in Greater Manchester to reports of children who go missing and what steps local authorities and their partners should take to try to prevent them going missing again. When a child goes missing or runs away from home, care or school, they are at risk of harm. The first part of this guidance therefore refers to protecting all children from the risks associated with going missing, whether they are looked after children or children who live within their family home. Later sections set out the additional steps to be taken in regard to children missing from care or other settings.

Many children will exhibit normal adolescent behaviour in testing boundaries and it is not helpful to consider every incident of lateness or absence for all people as high risk. Young people must not be reported missing as a behaviour management tool. However, some children will need to be treated as missing immediately due to their vulnerability. This protocol is based upon the principles of sound individual risk assessment, by carers, professionals and by GMP in classifying and responding to the incident.

### 3 Wigan Council Principals

The following procedure has been developed to provide a multi-agency response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home or care.

This incorporates and encompasses The Deal, ensuring an asset based approach to working with children and young people, developing strength and building resilience.

Children who are missing from home or care may be at greater risk of harm as a consequence of their basic need for food safety and shelter and / or from people with whom they may come into contact with.

Risks can include mental and physical harm, sexual exploitation, victim of abuse, drug abuse and involvement in a range of criminal activity. Additional vulnerabilities due to age, development, and level of understanding or the significance and seriousness of the circumstances that led to the missing episode may also be present.

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

Through an approach which encompasses GM guidance, a response to children missing from Home or Care in Wigan has developed. The aim of the intervention is to provide the right help and support at the right time to reduce risk and ensure that children and young people are safe.

## 4 Key Principles

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount.
- Effective use of data; utilising return interviews and services to better understand the needs of children and young people who go missing.
- Strengthening of partnership; working to ensure consistent and robust information sharing and pooling of resources to provide support to children and young people at risk.
- Alignment of good practice and data recording
- Strengthened strategic planning and preventative work to inform practice and reduce the number of missing children.
- Child protection procedures will be implemented for all children where risk of significant harm has been identified.
- Every missing child will be interviewed by someone other than their direct carer.
- Where the child is known to Children's Services or meets the criteria for referral to Children's Services the Local Authority will ensure that there are a range of service options to address the child's needs when they return.
- Effective links with Children Missing From Education.

## 5 National Guidance

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on local authorities and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from their family home or from local authority care (DfE 2014)

Any missing episode is potentially serious, one episode is one too many. Therefore prevention work relating to children going missing is of paramount importance. The prevention of children and young people going missing requires an integrated multi-agency approach to vulnerable children and young people.

There are no exact figures for the number of children who go missing or run away, but estimates suggest that the figure is in the region of 100,000 per year<sup>2</sup>. Children may run away *from* a problem, such as abuse or neglect at home, or *to* somewhere they want to be. They may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason, it is thought that approximately 25 per cent of children and young people that go missing are at risk of serious harm<sup>3</sup>. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. Missing children may also be vulnerable to other forms of exploitation, to violent crime, gang exploitation, or to drug and alcohol misuse.

Looked after children missing from their placements are particularly vulnerable. In 2012, two reports highlighted that many of these children were not being effectively safeguarded: the Joint All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry on Children Who Go Missing from Care and the accelerated report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's on-going inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. Key issues identified suggested that:

- children in residential care are at particular risk of going missing and vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation; and
- Local Safeguarding Children Boards have an important role to play in monitoring and interrogating data on children who go missing.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care)

## 6 Local Guidance, policy and procedure

### *Children missing from home and care – a standardised approach to dealing with missing and absent children and young people across Greater Manchester*

It is imperative that services working with children are able to and actively do identify those with a commencing pattern of missing episodes and provide the appropriate interventions at the earliest opportunity to prevent future incidents which may place them, or others, at risk. (GM principle B)

Children who go missing from care may as a result be placed at risk. The reasons for this are often varied and complex and cannot be viewed in isolation from their home circumstances and their experiences of care. Every “missing” episode should attract the appropriate response from the professionals involved with the missing person and they must collaborate to ensure a consistent and coherent response is given to the missing person on his/her return.

A standardised approach was developed; providing a framework for a co-ordinated, standardised and effective response from Local Authority’s, police and partner agencies across Greater Manchester to reports of children who go missing and what steps Local Authority’s and their partners should take to try and prevent them going missing again.

[http://greatermanchesterscb.procedresonline.com/chapters/p\\_ch\\_missing\\_home\\_care.html](http://greatermanchesterscb.procedresonline.com/chapters/p_ch_missing_home_care.html)

## 7 Definitions

Child/Young Person – For the purposes of this document a child or young person is someone under the age of 18 years.

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

Absent – A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be and where the circumstances and context suggest there is a lower level of risk.

Away from Placement without Authorisation – a looked after child whose whereabouts is known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the carer has concerns or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the police. These children would not be treated as either 'missing' nor 'absent' under the police definitions as their whereabouts is known even though it may be cause for concern.

## 8 Services in Wigan

### *A Localised Response*

The services in place for children missing from home or care have been under development, to ensure that statutory functions are discharged in addition to the provision of the right help and support for those children or young people who require this.

The development of services has resulted in the establishment of the Missing Hub. This service, co-located within Wigan Police station, alongside the CSE team, provides a holistic response to all children and young people reported missing.

The service facilitates a response to all children and young people across the continuum of need, ensuring a consistent response is provided to children and young people who have been missing from home.

The focus of the service will be to ensure the provision of Independent Return Home Interviews to children and young people who have been missing from home or care. In addition the service will seek to provide services and support to children and young people to reduce repeat missing episodes.

In addition there will be a focus on the development of intelligence and mapping to ensure a co-ordinated response with a view to reduce the number of children missing in the borough.

The development of the service will increase the capacity of the service to report on missing, identify areas of need and ensure a targeted response is provided.

### *Early Intervention and Prevention*

Early and effective sharing of information is essential for the identification of patterns of behaviour.

Early intervention as a result of information shared will seek to ensure provision of support before a pattern establishes, research highlights

### *The Missing Hub*

The Missing hub will be co-located within Wigan Police Station, alongside the multi-agency CSE team, the management oversight will be provided by the CSE Practice Manager.

The missing hub will consist of the Independent visitor and also the Missing Co-Ordinator.

The workers will be responsible for reviewing missing reports on a daily basis and determining the level of need and required response. This will include direct liaison with involved professionals to ensure that the circumstances of any missing episode are shared and understood by all professionals working with the child or young person.

The workers will offer and where accepted undertake return home interviews for all children requiring this service and ensure that this information is fed both to the allocated case workers and also into the weekly multi-agency missing meeting.

In addition to this the workers will attend a 4 weekly Governance meeting to ensure the review of intelligence and information to inform practice and developing responses to children missing from home, care or education.

The staff will facilitate and attend mapping meetings where multiple children have been identified as missing and ensure that unreported missing episodes are responded to, developing and supporting the education of parents and carers.

The service will also support the development of Risk Assessments for Children Looked After by the Local Authority who have been Missing From Care.

**Please see Appendix a.**

## 9 Responses to children missing from home or care

### *Children reported missing from home with no open involvement to Social Care*

All children within this category will be discussed within the multi-agency missing meeting held on a weekly basis, the circumstances of the incident (police intelligence) / report will be discussed and determination made regarding future action. Return Home Interviews will be offered to all children and young people who have been missing. Where required and accepted a Return Home Interview will be undertaken by the Missing Co-ordinator. This information will be recorded within the missing workspace on Liquid Logic. Where required Early Help Assessments will be undertaken in order to ensure the provision of appropriate support from the already involved agencies.

**See appendix b for pathway.**

### *Children subject of intervention under a Child and Family Assessment / Child In Need Plan*

The allocated social worker will receive notification of the missing episode and request an Independent Return Home Interview via the Children's Society Missing Worker. This Return Home Interview will be offered and undertaken within 72 hours of the missing episode and the information gathered recorded within the child's record and shared with the allocated social worker.

It may be in some cases that the allocated social worker and the Children's Society Missing Worker undertake a visit jointly.

The information regarding the missing episode will also be shared within the multi-agency missing meeting held on a weekly basis.

**See appendix c for pathway.**

### *Children subject of intervention under Child Protection Plans*

The allocated social worker will receive notification of the missing episode and request an Independent Return Home Interview via the Children's Society Missing Worker. This Return Home Interview will be offered and undertaken within 72 hours of the missing episode and the information gathered recorded within the child's record and shared with the allocated social worker.

It may be in some cases that the allocated social worker and the Children's Society Missing Worker undertake a visit jointly.

The information regarding the missing episode will also be shared within the multi-agency missing meeting held on a weekly basis.

**See appendix c for pathway.**

### *Children who are care for the by the Local Authority*

In all cases the Social Worker must visit and meet with the young person alone within 24 hours of his/her return. Where this is not possible, e.g. the child is placed at a distance from Wigan or the social worker is not available, a team manager may agree that the child is interviewed at a later date, or by an alternative person. The arrangement and reasons for this must be fully recorded. The Social Worker will ask the young person if they wish to speak to an independent Missing worker who will arrange to complete the Independent Return Home Interview. If the social worker is not available it is the responsibility of the team manager to arrange the visit. In all cases consideration will be given to the need to convene a strategy meeting.

**See appendix c for pathway.**

### *For Children open to the CSE multi-agency team*

The missing episode will be discussed within the Daily Governance Meeting in order to share information on a multi-agency basis and agree any required actions, considering the missing episode in the context of the identified CSE concerns. A missing worker will attend Daily Governance Meetings where missing reports are discussed. The need for an independent return home interview will be determined within Daily Governance Meeting and arranged appropriately.

**See appendix c for pathway.**

## 10 Intelligence and Prevention

Information gathered as part of return home interviews provide an opportunity to inform case planning, for wider strategic planning and for professionals to take into account the children's views. The outcome of interventions will be recorded within Liquid Logic to ensure that information can be accessed and form part of the wider plan for the child.

This information will also be accessed and subject of scrutiny as part of the analysis of the data gathered. The information will be reviewed within Missing meetings and Governance meetings. This will allow the opportunity for scrutiny of return home interviews, ensuring that the child is central to the process but also to assist in the development of intelligence gathering in respect of heat mapping; identifying risk within areas. This will allow a focus on intervention and prevention to reduce the risk of missing episodes.

The data and analysis in respect of missing children will be provided within regular reports including the lead member and WSCB.

Mapping meetings will also be undertaken on a regular basis where intelligence highlights a specific issue or concern. Where numerous young people are linked to the same report or similar circumstances. Mapping exercises will allow for the review of intelligence to identify patterns.

The data will include detail of:

- Time and duration of missing episodes
- Information from partner agencies
- Review of return home interview
- Frequency of missing episodes

### *Children Looked after by OLA but placed within Wigan Borough*

When another local authority places a child in the Wigan area, they are required to notify Children's Services of the placement (See appendix e)

Upon receipt of the notification all children are recorded on Liquid Logic as Looked After Children, cared for by another Local Authority and the notification information stored within their record.

Alerts will be sent to the Missing Hub notifying them of children and young people placed within the Wigan Borough, any information received in relation to risk regarding missing episodes will be shared with GMP during the weekly missing meeting to ensure that they have all relevant intelligence relating to potential risk of missing episodes.

All reports of missing episodes will be recorded within the child's record within Liquid Logic and contact will be made with the responsible authority to ensure that they have been made aware of the missing episode.

The episode will be discussed within the weekly missing meeting and any information shared will be passed to the responsible Local Authority.

The young person remains the responsibility of the placing Local Authority to ensure that statutory guidance and Local Authority procedures are followed.

Provision of an Independent Return Home Interview is accessible as a commissioned service via the Missing Hub.

## 11 Children who repeatedly run away and go missing; intervention strategies

All agencies will operate an escalating system of interventions to reduce the likelihood of a child repeatedly going missing.

Individual cases will be reviewed on a weekly basis within the weekly missing meeting to ensure that service provision remains effective and suitable to need.

In addition the 4 weekly governance meeting will consider those young people identified as high risk.

This intervention should try to identify any 'push' or 'pull' factors as well as any other agencies that could provide support. In the case of 'pull factors' it may be necessary to target those in the community who harbour the missing person or exploit them with regards to crime, sex or drugs. The intervention should also establish which other agencies are already involved in working with the child/young person.

- After Three Missing From Home and Care episodes within a 1 month period or 1 period exceeding 24 hours: an Intervention meeting should be held at the earliest opportunity including all involved professionals to ensure the appropriate sharing of information.

Meetings at this level should only be required for a small number of children provided that the protocol has been followed with regard to early intervention and prevention. In addition to seeking to reduce future missing episodes and reduce any apparent risks to the child, this meeting should also quality assure compliance with the protocols and the efficiency of earlier intervention meetings and return assessment. It is recognised that there will be some children who go missing repeatedly within a short period of time where this level of intervention will immediately apply.

- For children and young people considered to be at Significant Risk of Harm as a result of missing periods: A MFH Assessment will be developed and subject of regular review for all children considered to be at significant risk, this will include a risk assessment which will be shared with the police to ensure effective responses. This assessment will be reviewed within the weekly and 6 weekly meetings held. Where concerns regarding the risk of significant harm have been identified consideration will be given to convening a strategy meeting.

If the child/young person continues to be reported missing beyond this level the senior management team for children's services and police should discuss the case and consider whether it is appropriate for them to intervene further or for the Assistant Chief Constable (or their nominated representative) / Director of Children's Services (DCS) to be asked to intervene.

Other risk factors demanding escalated interventions include:

- Any case where the risks involved in even a single future missing episode is very high.
- Cases where it has been identified that immediate action is necessary to ensure the wellbeing of the person.

## 12 Notification and Escalation

In all cases where a child has been missing for over 24 hours the Assistant Director and Enhanced Service Manager for Children In Need and Children in Need of Protection should be notified adhering to the established 'Need to Know' guidance.

Notification will include a brief account of circumstances and planned actions which should include a multi-agency strategy meeting.

For children missing for 72 hours or more an urgent strategy meeting should be convened and the outcome shared with the Assistant Director and Enhanced Service Manager.

For children missing for a period of 7 days or more; a strategy meeting will be held and chaired by a Principal Manager, where involved the IRO should also attend the meeting alongside all involved professionals, regular updates will be provided to the Assistant Director and Enhanced Service Manager.

Where disagreement or challenge is evident in the decision making and planning process and is unresolved the issues should be escalated using the WSCB escalation policy.

## 13 Recording and Reporting

The Missing From Home Workspace within Liquid Logic will hold all information regarding missing episodes and responses, including completed Return Home interviews.

**Please see appendix d.**

A Dashboard will be created on a monthly basis and will be presented and discussed within the Monthly Missing Meeting.

The Dashboard will consider

- Number of reported episodes in the period.
- Case status of missing episodes
- Number of return interviews completed
- Number of interviews declined
- Primary factors identified in respect of the missing period
- Number of children with repeat missing episodes

## 14 Monitoring

The Monthly Missing Meeting will report directly to DMT ensuring that regular updates are provided.

**Please see Appendix e For the Terms of Reference for the Monthly Missing Meeting.**

In addition The Missing from home WSCB Sub Group will ensure that Missing From Home remains a priority for Wigan Council by having oversight of the following;

- Implementation of "Missing from Home and Care" protocols and procedures.
- Evidencing the response to DCSF re: NI 71, Missing from Home / Care.
- Reporting information about patterns of absence among Looked After children / young people to the Director of CYPS and to Lead Councilor responsible for "corporate parenting".
- Receiving standardised report from GMP Missing from Home SPOCs, Children's Residential Services and ensure they are analysed at Missing from Home / Care Operational Group
- Any issues/concerns will be raised with WSCB via WSCB dataset, or WSCB Executive Report on a bi-monthly basis.

This Protocol will be reviewed 6 months after its implementation and annually thereafter.

## Appendices:

Appendix a:	Missing From Care Risk Assessment and Action Plan .....	22
Appendix b:	Pathway for children not known / open to Social Care .....	27
Appendix c:	Pathway for children subject of Statutory Social Care Intervention .....	28
Appendix d:	Pathway for Looked After Children placed in Wigan by Other Local Authority ...	29
Appendix e:	Return Home Interview.....	30
Appendix f:	Children Missing from Home or Care: Monthly Missing Meeting .....	32

## Appendix a: Missing From Care Risk Assessment and Action Plan

To be completed for all young people looked after where a risk of running away has been identified or after the first occasion a young person has run away.

Planned Placement: To be completed at pre placement planning meeting

Emergency Placement: To be completed within 3 working days.

The meeting should always include the carer and Social Worker and Family Placement Officer when applicable. The meeting must wherever reasonably possible also include the young person and her/his parents unless this is deemed inappropriate. If issues are complex, consider consultation with the Police. This assessment should be updated on a regular basis (minimum every 6 months).

Name of Child or Young person:..... ID:..... Date of Birth:.....Age:.....Legal Status..... Date of Meeting..... Date of Review.....

- Any child or young person **12 y/o or under** whose whereabouts are unknown will automatically be considered classed as **missing or absconded and reported to Police immediately, who will also automatically classify them as 'Missing'**. It is still useful during investigations and intervention if this risk assessment below has been completed. For children or young people **13 y/o and above**, this risk assessment must be completed and be based on age, current circumstances, experiences, background and ability.
- This risk assessment grid should be used as a guide and involve discussion and pooling of information to agree an informed risk assessment by the care services. This will help to establish an assessment of their vulnerability and how to respond appropriately.
- It should be noted that on reporting to the Police they will conduct their own immediate risk assessment of each incident and may subsequently allocate a higher or lower risk based on GMP definitions. Their risk assessment will utilise information from this risk assessment done by the care provider, social worker and young person etc.

Risk indicators	Risk assessment information
<b>Pattern and History</b>	
What are the usual circumstances of the child/young person going missing ie is the young person running to someone or from a situation? When does the young person usually leave the home?	
When was the last episode and is there a pattern?	
Where do they usually go? i.e. with family or friends or with people who are unknown or undesirable. Is there any specific risk if they go there?	

Level of maturity young person has shown in being able to make decisions about themselves or others. How able is the young person to cope without adult support?	
Past method of return ie via family, police or on their own?	
<b>Concerns / Vulnerabilities</b>	
Any Mental Health issues?	
Risk of suicide/self-harm and what are the indicators or triggers for this?	
Medication / medical conditions?	
Physical or learning disability / difficulties?	
Likely use of drugs/ alcohol/ solvents and what type and amount?	
Risk of sexual exploitation? Have CSE protocols been activated ie has a CSE strategy meeting been held?	
Any previous harm suffered while absent?	
Any concerns about friends/ partners/ associates?	
Past involvement of offending and in what form?	
Is the child/young person's behaviour likely to be a risk to the community and in what way?	
Are they experiencing bullying/ racial and/or homophobic abuse?	
Any signs or indicators that child is experiencing difficulties or abuse in the placement?	
Does the young person want to live in the current placement?	
Any concern of abduction or being prevented from returning?	
Is there a risk of forced marriage?	
Is there a risk of trafficking or where they a victim of trafficking previously?	

Are there any known issues / events happening in the child's / young person's family or close friends?	
<b>Current Circumstances</b>	
What are the agreed coming in times?	
What are the agreed consequences if the young person misses these times?	
Does the child / yp have access to any money and how can they access this if necessary?	
Is the young person able to use public transport?	
Does they young person usually carry a bus pass?	
Is the young person familiar with the surrounding area?	
Do they have a mobile phone? Does it usually have credit or not or is it on a contract?	
Who is able to collect this young person if they are located but are not able to or will not return themselves?	
What was the young person's behaviour like last time they were collected from a missing or absent incident?	
<b>Any further information and knowledge which may help before, during or after a missing episode:</b>	

In cases of little knowledge or where there is disagreement, the child or young person should be considered as being at higher risk by the care provider and reported immediately.

- **Concluding risk assessment in the event of the child/young person failing to return:**

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- **Any Further Action to be taken to reduce the likelihood of the young person going missing (in bullet points, including Support and Prevention Strategies)**

**ACTION PLAN** to be implemented when absent:

1. Thoroughly search the building and immediate surrounding area.
2. Try to contact the young person on their mobile
3. Contact family/ relatives / friends as follows:

a) Parents: **Yes/No**. Details:

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b) Grandparents / other family members: **Yes/ No**. Details:

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c) Brothers / sisters: Yes/ No. Details:

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d) Friends: Yes / No. Details:

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4. If whereabouts are known: the young person is absent without permission and the Police do not need to be notified unless there is a 'concern for welfare' report needed (see below). What steps need to be taken to enable the young person's return? See above re. curfew, public transport etc.

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5. See list below of addresses known to be visited by the young person and what the response should be if located there. If the young person is judged to be unsafe at any of these addresses, the police should be notified immediately but as a 'concern for welfare' report, rather than a missing report since the individual's whereabouts are known.

Address	Level of known risk at address	Action to be taken (is there need to make a "Concern for Welfare" report to police?)*	Maximum time before reporting to police

6. If whereabouts are not known:

If absent for more than \_\_\_\_\_ hours after due back and no contact has been made then initiate MFC procedures and report to Police who will conduct their own risk assessments but utilising the information contained here. Do not delay reporting to Police for a period longer than 6 hours. You should inform the Police of any delay before reporting so this can be taken into account.

7. On Return:

- The young person will have an initial immediate welfare check either by the Police or by a member of staff in the home / foster carer.
- The young person will be offered a full return interview with an Independent Agency: **Yes / No**.  
Details of services available: \_\_\_\_\_  
A full return interview should be properly explained to the young person and be encouraged, particularly in circumstances where there is believed to have been risky behavior involved or the incident was out of character.
- Social Worker will visit following return within \_\_\_\_\_ days.

8. This risk assessment has been explained discussed, and agreed by the following people. It will be reviewed at least every 6 months and more frequently if there are changes to the situation or concerns arise.

a) Residential Staff member / foster carer: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Social Worker: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Young Person: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

d) Parent(s): Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

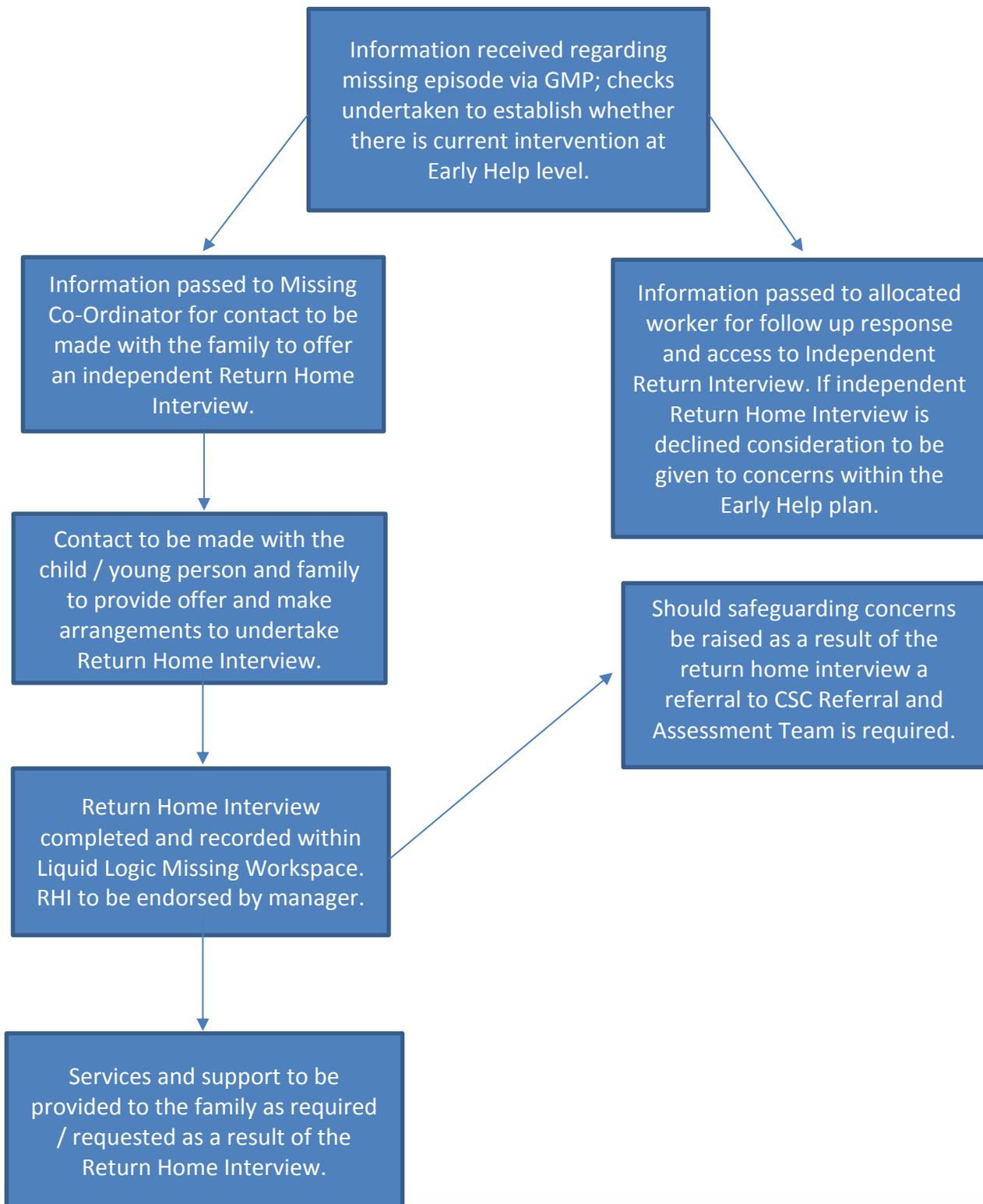
e) Family Placement Officer: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

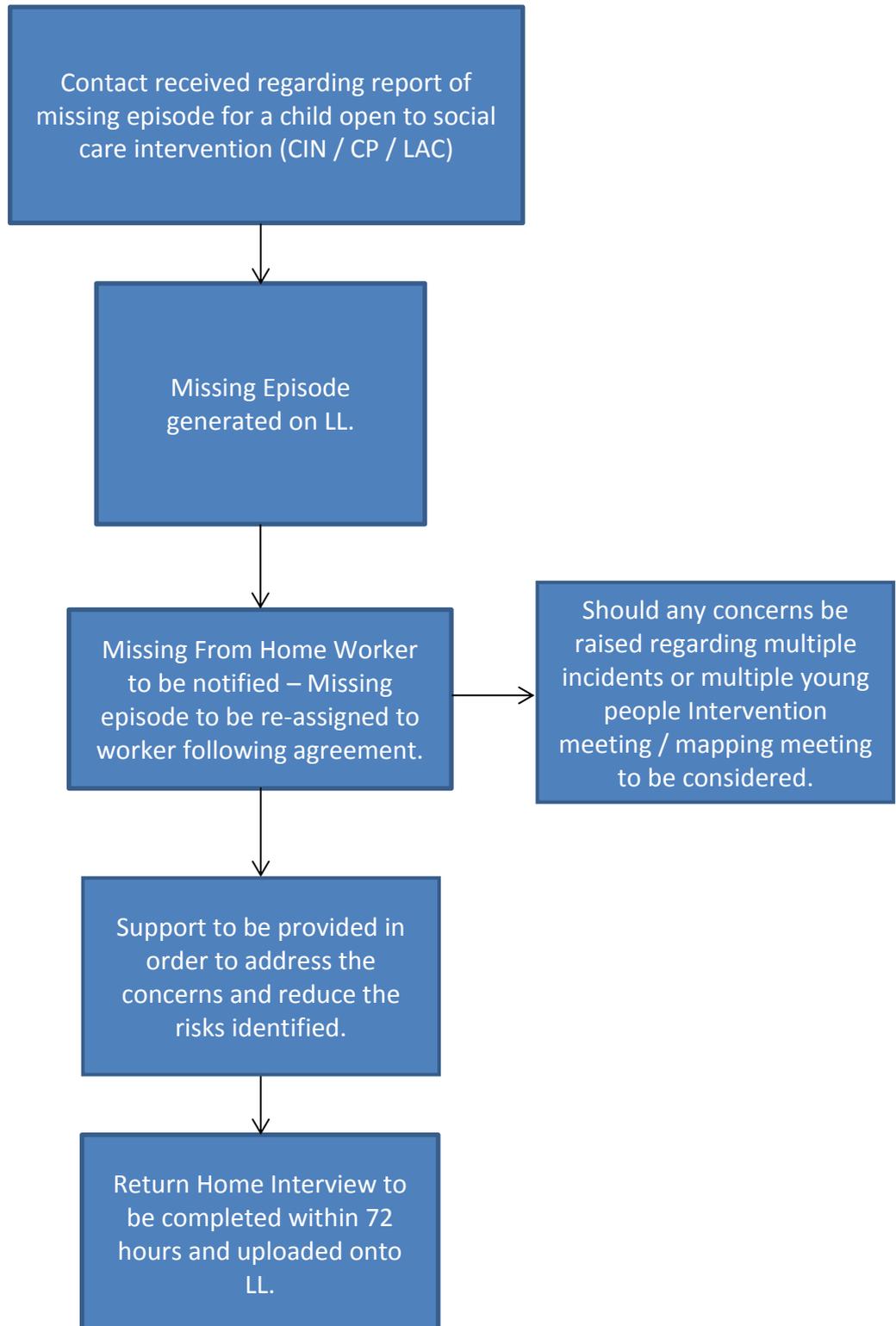
f) Team Manager and/or Service Manager (Social Care): Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

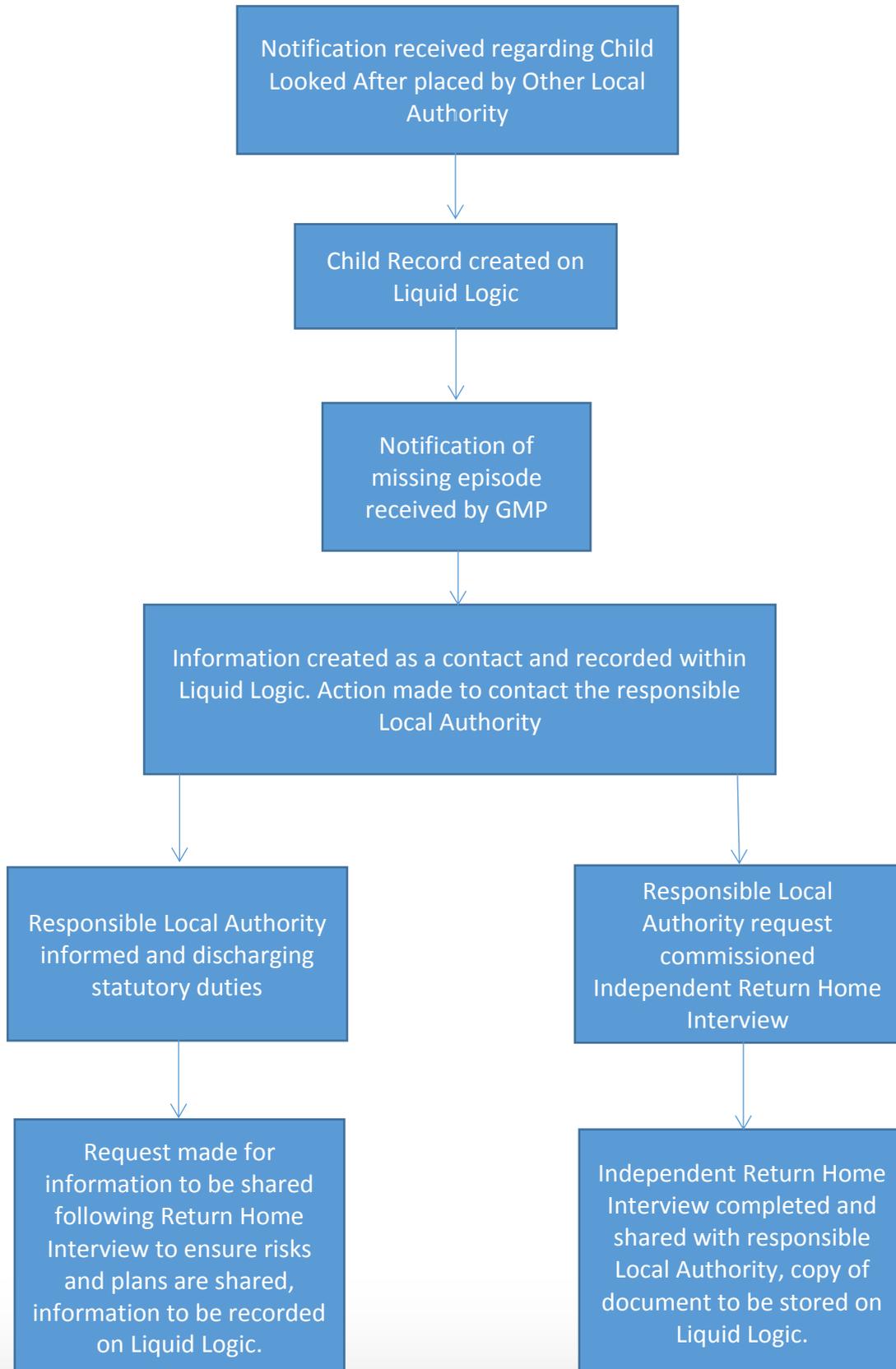
Appendix b: Pathway for children not known / open to Social Care



Appendix c: Pathway for children subject of Statutory Social Care Intervention



Appendix d: Pathway for Looked After Children placed in Wigan by Other Local Authority



## Appendix e: Return Home Interview

<b>Wigan Council</b>			
CYPS - Managers (49869)			
Tel:			
Fax:			
<b>Missing Person Return Interview</b>			
<b>Details of Child: Tom Missing (Ref: 1008803)</b>			
Family Name	Missing	Given Names	Tom
		Case Number	1008803
			MISP_RI
Date Reported Missing	09-May-2016		
Date/Time Missing	09-May-2016 09:00		
Date/Time Found	15-May-2016 16:00		
Date Form Commenced	16-May-2016		
Date Form Completed	16-May-2016		
Police Log no	PO-1254689		
Brief Overview of Missing Episode	Brief Overview of Missing Episode		
Have you checked the young person's attendance at school?	Yes		
Detail of attendance	Detail of attendance		
Have you checked with Health to establish if the young person has any health concerns?	Yes		
Detail of health concerns	Detail of health concerns		
Missing Person Interview taken place	Yes		
Reason Missing Person Interview not taken place			
Further Details			
Was an Independent Return Interview Offered?	Yes		
Was the Independent Return Interview Accepted or Declined?	Accepted		
Reason Independent Return Interview Declined			
What happened to make you go missing? (Planned, bored, something happened, to get away ...)	What happened to make you go missing? (Planned, bored, something happened, to get away ...)		
What happened whilst you were missing? (Where did you go, who were you with, any trouble, anybody else saw you/met you, how did you get back, how did you feel?)	What happened whilst you were missing? (Where did you go, who were you with, any trouble, anybody else saw you/met you, how did you get back, how did you feel?)		
What can be done to prevent you going missing again?	What can be done to prevent you going missing again?		
Any concerns/issues raised by the young person?	Any concerns/issues raised by the young person?		
Is there any further information, including intelligence that is not subject to this report?	No		
Child Protection Referral	No		
Details of where/when return interview took place (time/date/place)	Details of where/when return interview took place (time/date/place)		
Details of person coordinating return interview and any other persons present	Details of person coordinating return interview and any other persons present		
I (name of the young person)	Tom Missing		
consent to this form being shared with (details)	consent to this form being shared with (details)		
Name of Child / Young Person	Tom Missing		
Signature:			

**Questions for return interview**

Why?	Yes/No	Comments
Anything in the home?	Yes	Comments
Peer pressure?	Yes	Comments
Going to get drugs/alcohol?	No	
Wanting family contact?	No	
To clear your head?	Yes	Comments
Did you plan to run way - take food, clothes, money?	Yes	Comments
Did you just stay out?	No	
Did friends encourage you to stay out?	No	
Were you kept against your will?	Yes	Comments

When out	Yes/No	Comments
Were you scared to return?	No	
Did you at any point want to return?	No	
Did anything bad happen to you - hurt, injured, drugged, abused (sexual,physical,mental)?	No	
Were you held captive?	No	
Were you offered drink/drugs - how much, what was it, was it bought, given or stolen and where from?	No	
Did you have anywhere to stay? Where did you go?	Yes	Comments
Were food, money and clothing an issue? If so how did you manage?	No	
Did you manage to shower and if so where?	No	
Did you manage to change your clothes and if so where?		
Was there anything you needed whilst away?		
Did you make contact with anyone whilst away - friends, family or carers?		
Did you get involved with the police?		
Did you commit crime - on your own, with someone, did someone ask you to do it?		
Did you run from the police?		

Returning	Yes/No	Comments
Did you return of your own accord?	No	
Were you returned by someone?	Yes	Police found me
Did you ask to be picked up?	No	
Were you scared to come back?		
How do you feel now that you are back?		
Is there anything that you need?		
How have you been treated since you got back?		

Completed By:

Choose a Manager's Name to authorise the Missing Person Return Interview form

**Authorisation**

Authorised By   
 Authorised On 16-May-2016

**Forward to Police**

**\*Please now e-mail or fax this record to Police Missing Person representative\***

Date form forwarded to your police divisional representative

**Attachments (0)**

There are no attached documents

## Terms of Reference

### *Background:*

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on Local Authorities and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local Authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from home, care or education.

***Children may run away from a problem, such as abuse or neglect at home, or to someone they want to be. They may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason, it is thought that approximately 25% of children that go missing are at risk of serious harm. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. Missing children may also be vulnerable to other forms of exploitation, to violent crime, gang exploitation or to drug and alcohol misuse.***

(Department for Education; statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, Jan 2014.)

The following procedure has been created to provide a joined up response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home, care or education. This Joint Protocol is important for the safeguarding of children and families in Wigan, 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, Care and Education.

The Governance Meeting will provide scrutiny and review of services in place for children missing from home or care.

The responsibility for the risk management plans will remain at a multi-agency level however will occur in line with statutory process and procedure, incorporating concerns or interventions for children missing from home or care into the over-all plan in place for the child.

The responsibility for the implementation of the appropriate support regarding responses to missing episodes will be the responsibility of the missing hub. This will occur within the context of the plan in place for that young person at either an Early Help or statutory level.

The governance meeting 'Monthly Missing Meeting' will remain multi-agency focussing on the 'so what' element, reviewing and analysing data to understand and respond to children and young people. The provision and impact of this will be subject of review through the governance process.

The meeting will focus on the review of data and review of risk levels to ensure that interventions remain effective and are reviewed appropriately.

### *Objectives:*

The purpose of the Governance meeting will be to, on a monthly basis, to ensure a forum for multi-agency information sharing, review of service provision and to ensure that the focus of intervention remains central to the principles outlined by statutory guidance and the agreed standardised approach adopted by Greater Manchester.

The missing Hub was developed in February 2017 in order to provide a consistent response to all children and young people who have been missing from home or care.

Information regarding missing episodes will be received directly by the missing hub on a daily basis. Upon receipt of the information the missing workers will liaise with those professionals involved with the child or young person to ensure that the offer of an independent return interview is offered. For those children not open to services contact will be made directly with the family via the Missing Hub to offer these services.

The Missing co-ordinator and Missing worker will undertake responsibility for Independent Return Home Interviews and will support completion of the associated risk assessments if required.

The information as part of any intervention will be made available to any lead professional to ensure that the information gathered is considered as part of wider service intervention and planning.

The Independent Return Interview will be offered, and undertaken where possible, within 72 hours.

All missing episodes will be discussed on a weekly basis within the missing meeting which is a multi-agency meeting. The detail of missing incidents and the outcome of interventions will be discussed and reviewed where required.

Where required Intervention Meetings can be held as part of the weekly missing meeting, this meeting will be chaired by a practice manager or advanced practitioner from Social Care.

The Monthly Missing Meeting will subsequently provide scrutiny and oversight to the interventions in place, ensuring that all information is shared across the partnership.

### *Issues:*

In order for the Governance meeting to be effective consideration has been given to the potential risks and pitfalls in order to ensure that the appropriate strategies are in place to manage and negate these.

- Maintenance of the already existing positive multi-agency working relationships. The development of the CSE team has built and maintained positive working relationships across the partnership, the development of the missing hub recognises the link between missing and CSE and as such the services for missing children will be co-located with the CSE team. This will allow for the service to capitalise on the already existing links and to ensure that missing is not considered in isolation.
- Amendments to the referral process. Referral pathways have been developed to ensure that processes in place are understood and are accessible to professionals working with children and young people. This will ensure a timely response within statutory timescales and allow the information to inform wider interventions for children who have been missing from home or from care.
- The champion's model will remain in place in order to ensure that the specialist knowledge within the team is disseminated throughout services to ensure that all professionals working with children and young people are able to identify and respond appropriately to missing concerns.
- Recording of information; previous case information has been held within AGMA. However the implementation of Liquid Logic Work space will allow for the recording of information within the child's own record. The Governance meeting will be recorded and circulated to all agencies involved. It is recommended that in light of the developments across Children's Services that all missing interventions are recorded within the missing workspace providing the opportunity to report on missing, responses and impact.
- A risk indicator of CSE is a child Missing From Home. The missing hub will be co-located within the CSE team to ensure that any CSE concerns can be identified and responded to through the provision of the existing services.

### *Methodology:*

In order to ensure the implementation and maintenance of the Governance meeting and to ensure its effectiveness consideration has been given to the information required in order to ensure that the process was a valuable one.

It is considered that the Governance Meeting will provide an opportunity for all agencies working directly with children from home or care to share information, review interventions and ensure that the appropriate provision of service is in place and that that multi-agency intervention and communication remains central.

The Governance meeting will be chaired by a Principal Manager / Practice Manager.

*The meeting will be attended by:*

- Social Care
- Greater Manchester Police
- National Probation Service
- Child Health
- Wigan Youth Offending Team
- Education
- Restorative Solutions
- Startwell
- Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol Services
- Wigan Council Housing Department
- Adult services

*The following aims and objectives have been identified:*

- The meeting will consider the data relating to missing; from both Children's Services and GMP. The meeting will seek to review and analyse the data to ensure an understanding of the issues identified.
- The Missing data which will be available via Liquid Logic will be considered, providing an accurate picture and allowing for exploration of any increase / decrease in risk to evidence the reason for potential changes.
- The number of new referrals into the service will be discussed to ensure that all professionals are aware of agency interventions and that information is shared to ensure that the child's needs are appropriately met.
- The cases considered to be high risk by virtue of frequency or severity will be considered to ensure that responses to the issues raised have been implemented.
- Case escalations, the meeting will provide the opportunity for any escalation to be discussed in order to ensure effective communication across agencies seeking to resolve any possible issues or disputes regarding case progression.
- There will also be the opportunity to consider particular cases where success has been achieved, allowing professionals to recognise positive progress, providing an opportunity for learning across agencies.
- Identify any hotspots or requirement for mapping meetings in respect of one of more individual.
- Discussion regarding links to CSE concerns to prevent the duplication of discussions within multiple forums.

- The meeting will also consider those children who are placed within the Wigan Borough by other Local Authorities. Placing authorities will be invited to attend where required. This will ensure that all professionals are fully aware of children who may not be open to service in Wigan however remain at potential risk due to missing episodes in the Wigan area. This information will be passed to the responsible authority in order that they are able to plan for children considering any risk and information of concern.

*The Governance Meeting will achieve its objectives by:*

- Ensuring the identification of children and young people missing from Home or Care, ensuring the appropriate provision of help and support.
- Ensuring that the existing policy and procedure is being used to protect children and young people at risk of missing.
- Share information on a multi-agency basis regarding any concerns in respect of adults or young people where Missing concerns have been raised.
- Review the services in place to ensure effectiveness.
- Providing oversight and scrutiny with regards to intelligence and prevention.

*Expertise:*

The requirements of the group attending Governance Meetings;

In light of the statutory intervention for children Missing from Home or Care it is considered that the Governance Meeting requires a chair person who is aware of the daily practice and is able to make decisions in respect of the Threshold of Need.

Due to the statutory intervention a social care manager will chair the meeting to ensure that any safeguarding concerns raised can be addressed and responded to appropriately.

*Reporting:*

The Governance Meeting will provide a multi-agency information sharing forum for all agencies working with children and young people where Missing Episodes have been raised a concern.

The meeting and any subsequent actions will be circulated to all agencies one week prior to the next meeting, this will allow professionals with the opportunity to respond to any set actions and be able to provide an update at the following meeting.

The meeting will occur on a monthly basis.

The Governance Meeting will report to DMT on a bi-monthly basis and also report to the WSCB CSE sub-group in order to provide regular updates regarding performance and intervention.

### *Agenda:*

- Cases of concern (to be submitted prior to meeting for discussion)
- Multiple Missing Episodes / Frequent Missing
- Return Home Interviews
- Missing dashboard
- High risk missing
- Crime data
- Intelligence
- Mapping
- OOB Missing episodes
- Out of area placements
- Unreported missing episodes
- Dip sample of cases (focus on where service has been declined)
- Commissioning and reporting of new placements
- Trafficking

### *Work Plan*

The Governance meeting will report directly to Social Care DMT the CSE Sub-Group.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the meeting this will be reviewed.

Responses to children missing from home or care and multi-agency working will continue to be promoted not only within the team and direct members of the Governance meeting but also throughout the council ensuring that the Missing Hub provides a consistent, appropriate and most importantly safe response to the risks posed to children and young people as a result of Missing From Home Episodes.