**Timeframe for Reporting As soon as all enquiries to establish whereabouts have been exhausted, the child must be reported to police as missing without delay.** In some cases the young person may be reported missing immediately.

**Child Missing From Care**

(Any child under 18 years)

**MISSING:**

**‘Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed’.**

*\*ABSENT will not now be separately defined. All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from ‘no apparent risk (absent’ through to high risk cases that require immediate, intensive action. (2016 College of Policing)*

***LAC Children who are away from placement without Authorisation:***

-Whilst they are not missing, they may still be at risk.

-Carer or Social Worker should take reasonable steps to ascertain child’s well-being and visit if possible.

-If Young Person is at risk of harm to themselves or others police should be notified.

*(London Child Protection Procedures: 5th Edition, 2016)* [*http://www.londoncp.co.uk/*](http://www.londoncp.co.uk/)

Missing Risk assessment: should be completed for all young people who have been reported missing and/or where there are concerns that they may run away.

Foster Carer, Residential Placement to do initial checks with family / friends identified in Missing Risk assessment to see if child & young person can be located.

**If young person is missing for more than 72hrs. A written briefing outlining missing details, risks and a plan of action is to be sent to Head of Service for approval and shared with Operational Director.**

**Foster Carer / Placement to notify Police and EDT if Young Person returns.**

Foster Carer, Residential Placement reports Child & Young Person missing to the Police and EDT if they cannot be located.

Police missing report received (Merlin/PAC) by Children’s Social Care

Social Worker to ensure all relevant professionals involved are aware of missing episode, including IRO.

Social Worker to inform parents / any person with PR unless it is not practicable to do so or would be inconsistent with their welfare.



* MASH BSO’s enters missing contact on Mosaic to the allocated Team and tasks the Missing/Absent Child Record episode to the Missing Persons Co-ordinator **(MPC).**
* **MPC** enters date the young person went missing and when the young person has returned (If relevant)
* The MPC assigns the Return to Home Interview to the relevant Team and sends an e-mail to the allocated Team advising of the Missing Person Notification to offer an IRHI.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The SW team is responsible for ensuring the following safeguarding process for every allocated missing child:** | | **Cases:** | **Frequency:** | **Recording:** |
| **Missing**  **Risk assessment** | All open cases where a young person has gone missing should have an up to date missing risk assessment.  **Missing children are reviewed daily at the10:00 a.m. Integrated Risk Management meeting. Allocated SW and TM’s will attend as necessary.** | All open cases where a young person has been reported missing. | Reviewed every 3-6 months as part of the LAC review process for child or when there is a change in circumstances i.e. - placement change, risk increases. | Missing risk assessment on Mosaic and shared with Police, Parents, Carers and Placement. Forms part of overall care plan. |
| **Missing**  **from Care (MFC) /Strategy Meeting** | 1. Where there is suspected risk of harm to a child, the allocated social worker and police must hold a Strategy discussion immediately and agree the actions for locating the child. 2. A Missing from Care Strategy Meeting/Strategy discussion is to be held with police, social care, care providers, and any other parties involved within 72hrs, if the child remains missing. 3. Missing from Care Review Strategy Meetings to be held until young person has been found. | Meetings to be held as and when the child goes missing - OR - for children that go missing on a regular basis review meetings should be held until this pattern has reduced, | If young person is missing from Care a Strategy Discussion/Strategy Meeting to be held within 72hrs.  Still Missing at 7 days, a further strategy meeting to take place (use IRM)  Review strategy meetings fortnightly for 6 weeks if still missing- follow escalation process in protocol. | Missing from Care / Strategy Meeting in the main case file on Mosaic.  Ensure Managers are aware of missing episode, for Heads of Services and Operational Director to be notified within 72hrs. Strategic Director will be informed as necessary.  Ensure this is reflected on the Child’s case file. |
| **Safety plan** | Safety Plan to be completed with young person once they return and to record actions to be taken by young person and professionals to keep young person safe. | All open cases where a young person has been reported missing.  Safety Plan to identify a named person that the young person has said that they would be happy to talk for an Independent Return Home Interview (IRHI). | To be reviewed and updated as risk changes or 6 monthly if risk reduces. | Care Plan to include details of Safety Plan and actions to try and reduce missing episodes. |

**Child Returns / is Found**

*Designated LAC Health to be notified of Young Persons return to manage / support subsequent health needs.*

\*The Social Worker informs parent / person with PR and professional and network that the young person has been found.

*\*When a young person goes missing frequently they should be spoken to after each occasion and offered an IRHI.*

*\*It may not be practicable for the child/young person to be seen every time they return, but a safe and reasonable decision should be taken by the responsible team of how frequent the IRHI will be carried out, & by who and clearly recorded in their care plan.*

**Allocated worker/Duty social worker must make contact with the child, show care and concern, establish the welfare of the child and offer an IRHI within 72hrs of the child’s return.**

**The child is to be offered the options of an IRHI to be conducted by the Duty social worker, Children’s Rights Officer, or a trusted adult including the allocated social worker, Mentor, Youth Officer, Teacher etc.**

*Police Prevention Interviews (previously Safe and Well visits) as necessary.*

\*IRHI to be recorded on an Independent Return Home Interview template (under Missing people ‘Documents).

All relevant details from the IRHI to be discussed with the team manager and the police. Next steps taken may include safeguarding through S47 where appropriate and ensuring that any risks identified are considered in the child’s overarching plan and to develop a Safety Plan.

-If Young Person declines the IRHI then this is to be recorded as offered but not accepted.

-Young Person and Carers to be provided with information on Missing Person Helpline numbers and support services

**Independent Return Home Interviews**

**Child Open to CYP - Allocated Team**

* Allocated/Duty Social Worker to make contact with family/carer/residential home to ascertain if the child has returned.
* **Allocated/Duty Social Worker must show care and concern for the child’s well-being and establish if the child is safe and well.**
* Allocated/Duty Social Worker to offer an Independent Return Home Interview (IRHI) within 72 hours of the child being. Best practice would be for the IRHI to take place within 72 hours.
* The child to be offered the options of the IRHI being conducted by the Allocated Social Worker, Duty Social worker Children’s Rights Officer; or another trusted adult including Mentor, YOS officer or teacher.
* If the IRHI has been accepted and child wishes this to be undertaken by the allocated social worker, non-allocated SW or trusted adult (mentor, YOS officer, teacher), IRHI template to be completed and recorded on Mosaic using the IRHI workflow within 5 days of the young person’s return.
* If the IRHI has been accepted and the child wishes this to be undertaken by the Children’s Rights Officer, the allocated team to notify the officer accordingly and IRHI to be completed and recorded on Mosaic using the IRHI workflow within 5 days of the child’s return.
* All relevant details from the IRHI to be discussed with the Team Manager and the Police and appropriate next steps taken including safeguarding through S47 where appropriate and ensure that any risks identified are considered in the child’s over-arching plan and to develop a Safety Plan.
* If the IRHI has been refused then this to be recorded as offered but not accepted.
* Young person, parents and carers to be provided with information on Missing Person Helpline numbers and support services.