

Early Help and Children's social care

Children Missing from Home, Care and Education Joint Protocol (Social Care, Police & Education)

December 2023



**CROYDON COUNCIL
WORKING WITH CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME, CARE AND EDUCATION**

Please note:

This protocol considers and is additional to:

London Child Protection Procedures: children missing from care, home and education
[3. Children Missing from Care, Home and Education \(londoncp.co.uk\)](http://londoncp.co.uk)

DfE Statutory Guidance on 'Children who run away or go missing from home or care',
January 2014 [Children who run away or go missing from home or care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The following process is for children who are reported as missing from home, care and/or education. If you are concerned about a **missing family** where there are concerns for children or unborn children, the guidance can be found at [5. Missing Families for whom there are Concerns for Children or Unborn Children \(londoncp.co.uk\)](http://londoncp.co.uk)

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1.	Introduction	Page 3
2.	Purpose and scope of this document	Page 4
3.	Definitions used in this guidance	Page 5
4.	Children missing from home or care – Steps to be taken by parents, carers, or placement	Page 6
5.	Children missing from education	Page 7
	-Children reported as missing from education who are not already open to Children’s social care	Page 8
	-Children reported as missing from education who are already open to Children’s social care	Page 8
	-Children reported as missing from education who are a child looked after	Page 9
6.	Responding to a child reported as missing from home who is not currently open to Children’s social care	Page 9
7.	Responding to a child reported as missing from home who is currently open to Children’s social care	Page 10
8.	Responding to a child reported as missing from care	Page 11
9.	Robust safeguarding activity whilst a child is missing	Page 11
	-Missing strategy meetings	Page 12
	-Missing strategy meeting timescales	Page 13
	-Daily missing meetings	Page 14
	-Missing Briefings	Page 14
	-Line of sight report	Page 15
	-Management oversight	Page 16
10.	A One service approach – Responding to changes in vulnerability and risk	Page 16
11.	Return home interviews	Page 17
12.	Youth Justice	Page 19
13.	UASC who experience missing	Page 21
14.	Emergency Duty Team	Page 22
15.	Children Living in Croydon placed by another Local Authority	Page 23
16.	Recording	Page 24
	Appendices	
A	Missing Strategy Meeting Preparation Template for Schools	Page 25
B	Missing Strategy Meeting Agenda	Page 26
C	Daily Partnership Missing meetings	Page 27
D	Missing Briefing Template	Page 30
E	Missing Children and Young People: Flowchart of Process and Responsibility in Croydon CSC	Page 31

1. Introduction

This Missing Protocol has been designed to support an effective multi-agency collaborative approach to respond to children and young people who experience missing episodes from home, care and/or education. The Missing Protocol sets out the actions that should be taken by professionals to locate the child, to assist with their return and to identify the issues which caused, and may continue to cause, the child to go missing. This protocol should be used in conjunction with the London Safeguarding Children Procedures specifically the practice guidance on '[Children Missing from Care, Home and Education](#)' and 'Child Exploitation PAN London Operating Protocol'. This protocol takes account of the DfE Statutory Guidance on '[Children who run away or go missing from home or care](#)', **January 2014**. Where there are also concerns of child sexual exploitation (CSE) practitioners would also need to review the [London Safeguarding Children Procedures, Sexual Exploitation](#).

To achieve consistency in language and reporting, definitions of 'missing' have been provided below under, "3. Definitions and Guidance."

Children running away or experiencing missing from home, care or education is a key safeguarding issue for Croydon Children's Social Care and Croydon's Safeguarding Children Partnership. When a child, experiences missing from home, care and/or education, it is always to be treated as an indicator that something may not be right in the child's life. Croydon Children's Social Care and Croydon's Safeguarding Children Partnership treat every absence or missing occurrence as requiring professional attention, and practitioners need to offer a consistent and coherent response to safeguard children from any risk of harm which includes working preventatively.

Children who experience missing episodes are at risk of harm in the short term which can often have long term implications. Research findings estimate that approximately 25% of children and young people who experience missing are at risk of Significant Harm (Ofsted Missing Children, 2013) – determining which children requires professional judgement and assessment. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation. Studies such as those by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC, If Only Someone Had Listened, 2013) found that Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is much more prevalent than previously thought.

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighborhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, Children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. (Firmin, 2017).

There is therefore an opportunity to improve the lives of children in Croydon as a whole and Croydon's Safeguarding Children Partnership operationally and strategically respond to the patterns, themes, offenders, and locations of extra-familial harm identified through how we

respond to children who experience Missing.

2. Purpose and scope of this document:

This document contains the local procedures to be followed by Children's Social Care whenever a Police Merlin or Emergency Duty Team (EDT) notification is received by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) regarding any child who has been reported as Missing. This document is also for other professionals in Croydon Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

3. Definitions used in this guidance:

Child: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Any child who is 12 years old or younger should automatically be considered as high risk and classed as 'missing'. They must be reported to the police immediately.

Child Looked After: A child who is looked after by a local authority by reason of an Interim Care Order/Care Order or accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Care Experienced Young Person: A relevant, former relevant, qualifying, or eligible child or young adult (aged 18 and under the age of 25) as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

Young Adult: Any person over the age of 18 and under the age of 25

Missing: A child reported as missing to the police by their family, carer, Foster Carer or Placement.

Missing from Home: A child or young person reported as missing to the police by their family, carer or an involved professional e.g., social worker.

Missing from Care: A child or young person looked after who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g., school) and their whereabouts is not known.

Away from Placement without Authorisation is when a child looked after aged fourteen or above are not where they are expected to be, for a short period, with their whereabouts known or unknown to the carer.

A child looked after aged 14 years old or under who is not in their placement without authorisation must be considered as 'missing' and the Protocol should be followed.

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

Children who are 'away from placement without authorisation would not usually come within the definition of 'missing.' However, they must be carefully monitored as the child may be in an environment likely to increase risk to them. They must be monitored over periods of time

with consideration given to escalating the response if there is a change to the circumstances which has increased the level of risk.

If a child or young person has not been seen or their whereabouts independently verified, they are no longer Away from Placement without Authorisation and they should be reported as missing.

If the assessment from the carer at the time is that there is no apparent risk for the child's immediate safety, but they are away from the placement without permission, this should still be recorded, and the social worker informed. This categorisation should be reviewed by the social worker with the carer with a view to the child becoming 'missing'.

Late returning home *A child who is missing from home or care for a short period i.e., up to 3 hours.*

In this instance, and where the child was not reported missing, the Team Manager and Missing Lead may consider offering a Return Home Interview if circumstances indicate increased vulnerability.

For example

- *Child A has not returned home from school and is now 2 hours late. They are 16 years old and have not been reported missing before. They return just before 3 hours after their expected return time. In this instance, this would be classified as late returning home.*
- *Child B has left the family home, following an argument. They are 10 years old and have never been reported missing before. They are located within 2 hours of having last been seen. They share that they feared being away from home and that they wanted to run away. In this instance, this should be seen as a missing episode.*

A child or young person must be reported missing to the Police when their whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests they may be at risk of harm.

After a missing status has been recorded by the Police, the Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team will update the status on CRS. **In no circumstances should the Social Worker or Team Manager change the missing status of a child or young person.**

See Appendix E for a visual flowchart of process and responsibility in Children's Social Care of how we respond to children and young people reported as Missing.

4. Children missing from home or care – Steps to be taken by a parent, carer, foster carer or placement

When a child goes missing from their home, parents and carers are expected to undertake critical actions to help locate a child whose whereabouts are unknown in advance of reporting them as missing to the Police (unless they are considered at immediate risk of significant harm). This is important information that is to be shared with parents where there are known

vulnerabilities around a child experiencing Missing Episodes or the child has experienced Missing Episodes to date.

Foster Carers and Placement staff are expected to follow the Philomena protocol to undertake actions to try and locate a child who is missing before reporting them to the Police and Emergency Duty Team if it is safe to do so. This also applies to children living with their parents under Placement with Parents regulations.

Under the Philomena Protocol ([Click here to access protocol](#)), foster carers and placements are expected to undertake the same actions that would be expected of a parent or carer when there are concerns a child may be Missing:

Parent/carer/foster carer/placement are expected to:

- Fully search the accommodation and surrounding area.
- Search the home for any important leads e.g., mobile phones, diaries, letters, notes explaining absence, email, and website activity etc., which may inform the investigation and / or assist in protecting or recovering the child.
- Speak with other children / young people in the family or others who live in the home to obtain relevant information about the missing child.
- Speak to all professionals known to the child including school, health, police, Children's social care.
- Make all appropriate enquiries with regards to the whereabouts of the child. This will involve trying to contact the missing child, friends, family, associates, appropriate locations, local hospitals, and the local police custody office.

When a parent/carer/foster carer/placement is reporting a child or young person as missing to the Police, any relevant information that might help to find or support the child should be shared, including:

- Description of the child and their clothing last seen in/believed in possession of.
- Details of where the child was last seen and who are the child or young person's peers and family networks including contact details.
- Recent photograph of the child.
- Relevant addresses/locations frequented, young people or adults known to the child.
- Previous missing history and any notable patterns including locations found.
- Any precipitating factors that may have contributed to the missing episode.
- Any factors that increase the risk to the child (e.g., substance use, mental health, prescribed medication, learning or cognitive needs, known to be part of any groups, gangs or Organised Crime Groups, any items that indicate the type of risk or harm posed)

5. Children missing from education

Children who are not in education or who are frequently absent from education are often vulnerable children who could be experiencing problems and abuse at home or children who are at risk of extra familial harm.

All staff:

“should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called ‘honour’-based abuse, or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school’s or college’s unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures”. *Keeping children safe in Education (2023)*

Children who are missing from home and care are also at risk of being children missing from education (CME) if of statutory school age and post GCSEs, not in education or training (NEET).

Definitions of a child missing from education:

- Children missing from education (CME) relates to any child under the age of sixteen who is not on roll with a school.
- Children and young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) relates to any child 16 years and older who are not attending an education or training provision.
- Children who are absent from education relates to a school aged child where their attendance falls below the national average and could also include where children are persistently late to school. This could also include patterns of absence such as specific days of the week and for blocks of time.

Where a child is missing from home and care, it is expected that Croydon Children’s social care will work in partnership with education, to ensure the best outcomes for children. Some children who experience missing may also be children who are not on roll in education or training. However, there will be occasions where a child who may be reported as missing from home or care continues to attend school, as it will provide them a secure base. This could potentially prevent alerting other professionals from them being missing if all parties are not aware of the missing episode.

Children reported as missing from education who are not already open to Children’s social care

Education checks must be made with MASH education, to identify the educational provision the child is on roll with, and if they are missing from home, the educational provision must be informed that the child is missing within 24 hours of the Police Missing Merlin report being received. Education must explore whether they have seen the child within the time that they have been reported as

missing from home.

Educational history should be reviewed along with any indicators of harm identified by the MASH Social Worker and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This information should include –

- Attendance history
- Whether the child has any exclusions, suspensions, or managed moves between school provisions, as we are aware these are indicators of vulnerability and risk for children, who are experiencing missing and extra familiar harm.
- Family history and whether school have any current concerns for the safety and well-being of the child.

This information will help inform the outcome of the MASH assessment and recommendations as what action is required.

Children reported as missing from education who are already open to Children's Social Care

Where a child is allocated to a social worker and we are aware that they are missing from home, the social worker must contact school to see if the child has attended school, along with, and to inform the educational provision that the child is missing from home within 1 working day of the missing notification being received. Whilst we expect the parent, carer and/or placement to liaise with a school, Social Workers also have a duty to be proactive and involve a child's school or place of education to support increasing safety for a child who has been reported as missing.

Where a child has been reported missing for 24 hours a missing strategy meeting will be arranged to take place within 48-72 hours, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be invited to attend the meeting, so that they are able to provide educational information and concerns for the child. If they are unable to attend the arranged strategy meeting, they should provide an alternative member of their safeguarding team to attend, or in extreme circumstances where no one is available, complete the strategy meeting template, (See Appendix B) and submit, ahead of the meeting.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have the responsibility to inform Children's Social Care when a child has attended their provision and share any information the child has shared about their whereabouts or circumstances as soon as the child has been registered as being at school. This will then enable Children's social care to visit the child and support them back home, (where safe to do so) and complete the return home interview.

Where it is known that a child who is open to Children's Social Care where they are missing from education, Children's Social Care should follow the children missing from education policy ([Click here for Policy](#)) and work in partnership with education to ensure a school placement is found, for the child.

Where a child continues to be missing from education and appropriate action is not being taken, please refer to the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership escalation and resolution policy ([Click here for Policy](#))

Children who are looked after and reported as missing from education.

Where a child is looked after and missing from care, the social worker must contact school to see if the child has attended school, along with and to inform the educational provision that the child is missing from home within one working day of the missing notification being received,

Where a child has been reported missing and the episode has exceeded 72 hours, a missing

strategy meeting must be convened, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be invited to attend the meeting, so that they are able to provide educational information and concerns for the child.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have the responsibility to inform Children's Social Care when a child has arrived at their provision and share any information the child has shared about their whereabouts or circumstances as soon as the child has been registered as being at school. This will then enable Children's Social Care to visit the child and support them back home, (where safe to do so) and complete the return home interview.

Our Virtual School and the child's Advisory Teacher must be informed when a child has been reported missing from placement and when they have returned to our care.

Where a child has been missing for a prolonged period, the Virtual School must be informed when the child has returned, and a scheduled case discussion must be requested to start to support the child back into education.

Where a child is missing from education and is of statutory compulsive education age there may be available, additional funding for the child to be able to access additional tutoring, whilst they are waiting to be allocated an educational provision.

For further information about what to do should a child be missing from education please refer to [Children Missing from Care, Home and Education \(londoncp.co.uk\)](http://londoncp.co.uk)

6. Responding to a child reported as missing from home who is not currently open to Children's social care

- Alerts for children who have been reported as missing to the Police will be sent to Croydon's Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by way of a Police Merlin and/or an Emergency Duty Team (EDT) Alert.
- The MASH Contact and Referral Officer will check CRS to determine if the child is already known and open to another team, in which case, they will follow the process described in Section 6 for children already open to Children's Social Care.
- If the child is not known previously to Children's Social Care, a MASH Business Support Officer first needs to create the child's record on CRS.
- MASH notify the Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team and the Missing Lead to their respective shared email address missingchildren@croydon.gov.uk who will open a missing episode on the child or young person's case file.
- All Merlin reports and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) numbers relating to the missing episode for the missing child or young person should be uploaded to Documents and/or be recorded on CRS by MASH.
- A MASH Team Manager will review and triage the information, assign a 'RAG' rating recommendation according to the level of risk as detailed in the Croydon's Safeguarding Children Partnership Threshold Guidance, and share the agreed action with the Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team and the Missing Lead to their respective shared email address missingchildren@croydon.gov.uk.

- Outcomes at this stage for a child who is Missing:

No Further Action

- If the decision made by the MASH Manager is 'No Further Action,' this should be shared with the Missing Lead via the email address for this to be shared with an Adolescent Worker as part of Return Home Interview allocation. It is essential that children are offered a Return Home Interview even if the initial MASH decision is of No Further Action.

Progress to a Social Work Team for a Child and Family Assessment or immediate safeguarding

- If the MASH decision is that the child (and other children in the family) require a Child and Family Assessment or strategy meeting, this will be progressed to the appropriate Social Work Team. A Safer Plan must be started alongside the Child & Family Assessment.

Progress to Early Help

- If the recommendation from MASH is to refer into Early Help or Prevention and Diversion Services (such as services provided by the Youth Engagement Team and CLIP), an Adolescent Worker will still complete an independent return home interview which will be recorded on CRS.

7. Responding to a child reported as missing from home who is currently open to Children's social care

- Alerts for children who have been reported as missing to the police will be sent to MASH by way of a Police Merlin and/or an EDT Alert.
- The MASH social worker will check CRS to determine if the child is known and open to another team. If the Child is already open to Children's Social Care, the below process is followed:
- The details of the missing episode will be forwarded to the Social Worker, Team Manager, Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team and the Missing Lead (missingchildren@croydon.gov.uk). The Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team will open the missing episode on CRS.
- All Merlin reports and CAD numbers relating to the missing episode for the child or young person should be uploaded and or recorded on Documents in the Missing Pathway on CRS within 24 hours by the allocated social work team.
- When notified that a child or young person is missing, social workers must complete a Safer Plan triggered via CRS. For a repeat missing child or young person, it is the expectation that the Safer Plan is updated and reviewed for each Missing Episode. For children who experience multiple Missing Episodes, a group supervision is required and a Consultant Practitioner from the Young Croydon service will chair this.
- If the child or young person is living in another local authority and goes missing from that local authority, the allocated social worker must follow this missing protocol and ensure all information is recorded on CRS within the child or young person's missing episode.

8. Responding to a child reported as missing from care

- Alerts for children who have been reported as missing to the police will be sent to MASH by way of a Police Merlin and/or an EDT Alert.
- The details of the missing episode will be forwarded to the Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team and the Missing Lead (missingchildren@croydon.gov.uk). The Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team will open the missing episode on CRS, alert the Social Worker, Team Manager and independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).
- All Merlin reports and CAD numbers relating to the missing episode for the child or young person should be uploaded and or recorded on CRS within 24 hours by the Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team.
- If a child has been reported as **Away from Placement without Authorisation**, the social worker should contact the foster carer or placement to discuss what they have done to verify the location of the child, and communication had with a safe adult at the address, and when the child is expected to return to placement.
- Should the child not return within 3 hours of their expected return, then the social worker and team manager must be informed so that they can review risks to the child and decide to visit the child at the address they have provided, to ensure their safety and consider what risks they may be exposed to whilst away from Placement.
- If the child has not returned home and we are unable to verify their location then the child must be reported as a missing child to the Police.
- It is the expectation that the Safer Plan is updated and reviewed for each Missing Episode by the Social Worker and Team Manager. For children who continue to experience multiple Missing Episodes, a further group supervision is required with a Consultant Practitioner from the Young Croydon service to chair this.
- The social worker must inform the child's parents and any other adult with parental responsibility (unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so or would be inconsistent with the child's welfare).
- The Missing Lead and Young Croydon Consultant Practitioners are available for support and guidance.

9. Robust safeguarding activity whilst a child is missing

Croydon believes that all children who are reported as missing require a robust multi-agency response. The process described in the next section describes what actions are taken when a child is found and return home interviews, but it is imperative that between a child being reported as missing to Children's social care and the child being found, agencies work together during the time the child is missing. This includes being relational in our approach with the child & their family. Reaching out to children while they are missing daily, and seeking updates from their family. This activity is to be recorded on CRS.

Missing strategy meetings

- A missing Strategy meeting should be requested by the social worker, using the Police's 87a.
- If a child/ Young person has been missing for 24hours or more a strategy discussion should be convened and take place as soon as possible. The strategy discussion should take place no later than 48 to 72 hours from the child/young person being reported missing.
- DO NOT wait 24 hours to convene a strategy discussion if there is information to suggest that the child/young person maybe at imminent risk of harm. The team manager must add management oversight to evidence what is being completed to ensure safe return of the child/ young person.
- Initial missing strategy meetings should be arranged by the Police's Strategy meeting calendar. Each service area's business coordinator can access available missing strategy meetings via the following link <https://teamup.com/ksa4h948v6zxero3ej>
- Subsequent strategy meetings should be arranged at the initial strategy meeting.
- The key professionals to invite to the missing strategy meetings are Police, MASH health (where child is open to CSC) or CLA Health (where a child is CLA), and the child's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) from their educational provision. If the DSL is not available, then they should provide an update via the missing strategy meeting preparation template for schools (Appendix B). Both health teams have a duty system and requests to attend strategy meetings should be made via the appropriate email address:
- MASH health ch-tr.mash@nhs.net
- CLA health mhn-tr.LookedAfterChildrensTeam@nhs.net
- If a child is on a child protection plan or a child looked after then the Child Protection Chair and Independent Reviewing Officer should also be invited, should they be unable to attend they must be informed of what actions are being taken to find the child and any additional safeguarding concerns.
- Missing strategy meetings must be recorded within the missing pathway on CRS.
- Where a child has been missing for over 2 weeks, the Service Manager and Head of Service should be invited to the subsequent strategy meeting(s) and senior management will continue to be updated weekly via Missing Briefings.
- In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Service Manager or Head of Service to chair subsequent missing strategy meetings.

Missing strategy meeting timescales:

Initial missing strategy meeting

- No later than 48 to 72 hours from the time the child went missing, sooner if required due to risk & need.

Subsequent strategy meeting(s)

- Subsequent strategy meetings must take place within 5 days of the initial strategy meeting. Subsequent strategy meetings must continue to take place within at least every 5 working days.
- Any deviation from the above timescales must be agreed by a Head of Service and the decision recorded on CRS.

For more information relating to what should be discussed by the multi-agency network within a missing strategy meeting please see Appendix C for Strategy Meeting Agenda.

Dispute & Escalation

In the event the Social Care Team and/or Missing Team are in dispute about whether a Strategy Meeting is required this is to be escalated to the relevant Head of Service and Detective Inspector for the Missing Persons Unit and Child Exploitation Team as a matter of urgent priority.

Daily missing meetings

Every working day, Children's social care convene a multi-agency daily missing meeting takes place to review all children who have been reported by a parent, carer or professional, as missing from home, care and/or education and children who are away from placement without authorisation are also discussed. The purpose of these daily meetings is to ensure the application of best practice for, every child who experiences missing, and that they are safeguarded, by Children's social care and the multi-agency partnership.

Membership

Children's social care

- Young Croydon – Missing Lead, Consultant Practitioners, Adolescent Workers
- MASH – Senior Practitioner or Team Manager
- Performance and Business Intelligence Service Team
- Youth Justice Service
- Allocated Team Manager / Social Worker.

Police

- DI for Missing and Exploitation

Education

- Strategic Lead for Safeguarding in Education, Behaviour, and Inclusion Processes
- Safeguarding Lead

Health

- Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children
Croydon Health Integrated Safeguarding Team (CHIST)

The Daily missing meeting considers:

- Risks and harm disclosed or observed when the child returned to family or carers.
- Risks and harm identified by police whilst child was missing.
- Risks and harm identified in circumstances that led to a child going missing.
- Significant harm incidents that happened whilst missing.
- Risks particular to the needs of any child looked after that went missing, including children looked after placed out of county
- Vulnerability to and risk of harm from exploitation; and
- Perpetrators of serious harm
- Ensuring all children discussed have a Safer Plan generated that is being completed.

Minutes are individually recorded onto the child's CRS record and emailed to the child's social worker, lead professional, their managers and where relevant, the education DSL.

Identification of harm, indicators of exploitation and any intel concerning peer groups or networks and/or perpetrators of harm will be shared and recorded on the Contextual Harm Safeguarding module on CRS.

All children who meet the criteria below will be timetabled for discussion at the next Complex Adolescent Panel:

- Child is being exploited
- There are significant indicators of exploitation and harm
- The child is perpetrating serious harm to others

For further information on daily missing meetings please see Terms of Reference in Appendix D.

Weekly Missing Meeting

Every Friday, the Daily Missing Meeting is extended. In addition to the above agenda items, the meeting explores themes that have arisen from the Daily Missing Meetings throughout the week and strategic actions are planned to impact the practice system and safeguarding partnership more widely in Croydon.

Specifically, this includes:

- Practice and performance challenges – Both within Children's social care and the wider partnership.
- Emerging themes to be discussed in wider forums, such as the Complex Adolescent Panel.

Missing Briefings

A Missing Briefing is a specific document that informs our senior leadership team when a child has been reported missing from home for 5 days or more or care for 3 days or more. It is a formal document that requires:

- Details of the child's previous missing experiences, any known circumstances that the child may have been reported missing, specific vulnerabilities and risks to the child whilst they are missing and what we are doing as a multi-agency network to locate the child, and what the care and safety plan is for once the child has returned home or to placement.
- The notification for the need to complete a missing briefing will be sent via email to the Allocated Social Worker and Team Manager by the Missing and Exploitation Performance and Data Team.
- It must be completed and shared with the Missing Lead at the designated time, that it has been requested for.
- Missing Briefings are shared with Young Croydon Consultant Practitioners.

For children missing from home, a Missing Briefing must be completed when they have been missing for 5 days or more. Should the fifth day of missing fall within a weekend day the Social Worker or Team Manager should complete and send to Missing lead by 12pm on the Friday.

For children missing from care, a Missing Briefing must be completed within 3 days of the child having been reported missing from care. Should the third day of missing fall within weekends then the Social Worker or Team Manager must complete and send to missing lead by 12pm on the Friday. Young Croydon Consultant Practitioners also review completed Missing Briefings to offer further support to safeguard a child, such as convening a Group Supervision.

On receipt of Missing Briefing's the Senior Manager is to provide oversight and scrutiny of the child's circumstances to ensure compliance and safeguarding actions are timely, and this oversight is to be recorded on CRS.

Please refer to Appendix E for the missing briefing template

Missing line of sight reporting

A Missing line of sight report for missing children is written once a month to inform our Directors, Corporate Director and Lead Member for Children who have been experiencing missing episodes within that month or where the child is currently missing.

The line-of-sight report is to give an oversight of children who have been reported as missing from home and care, and where they may also be missing from education. It provides information regarding Children's Social Care response to the child whilst missing, ensuring we are acting and safeguarding the child, as well as informing of any themes, patterns pertaining to this vulnerable group of children and young people.

The information shared via the 'Missing Line of Sight Report' must be uploaded to the child's record on CRS by the author, and case file reviewed and recorded on CRS by the Senior Manager for the allocated team to provide senior manager scrutiny, oversight & safeguarding compliance for the child.

Safer Plan

A Safer Plan is a risk assessment and safety plan for children who experience missing. The Safer Plan encompasses all previous risk assessments: Trigger Plans, Grab Packs, Missing Risk Assessments & Safety Plan.

At point of completion the following information must be obtained, included in the Safer Plan and shared with the Police to support the professional network in locating the child in the event of any future missing episodes: -

1. Phone numbers and where possible IMEI's for handsets currently in use by the child.
2. Any bank cards being used.
3. Travel cards – Oyster etc.
4. A Digital photo of the child.
5. Any social media accounts.

The Safer Plan has been created in line with the Philomenia Protocol and has been ratified by our Police Colleagues to ensure Placements and Children's social care are fulfilling Corporate Parenting responsibilities for children looked after.

The plan is completed with the child and their network and is designed as a jointly owned intervention, travelling with the child and shared across key agencies. For it to be effective, it must be adopted as *the* 'safety plan' across the network and focus on increasing safety over eliminating risk. It should help achieve the anticipated outcomes of the child's overall plan.

The aim is to agree a shared language and understanding with the child, their family and network and detail how all can (and will) respond to missing episodes, extra-familial risk, harm and abuse. It is important that 'why' individuals are worried is clearly explained and documented and children's views are integral to the understanding of their circumstances.

There will be occasions when a child may not want to be a part of the process, however agencies should still work together to share information and explain their planned activity, sharing this with the child. When proposed actions override a child's wishes, decisions must be explained carefully and detail why such actions are considered proportionate and necessary.

The plan should travel with the child as a 'live' document. This could include a physical copy the child has and/or be shared with relevant partners to ensure the measures in place provide support where risk and safety are located.

The Safer Plan must be started within 24 hours of the allocated team receiving a referral/on a child's return from a missing episode and completed alongside the child, family & key professionals. The Safer Plan must be shared with the child, their family and professionals and updated following each missing episode.

Management oversight

In addition to Team Manager oversight from information shared in Daily Missing Meetings and strategy meetings, Team Managers must provide weekly management oversight of individual

children who are missing within their team. This must be discussed within supervision as well as management oversights recorded on CRS. Consideration should be given to: -

- The hypothesised or known 'push' and 'pull' factors contributing to the child's missing episodes.
- What the multi-agency network is doing to locate the child.
- What the support plan is for the child, whilst missing and when returned home or back to placement.
- Compliance with safeguarding procedures & operational actions for the social worker.

Data Collection

Information regarding Victims, Offenders, Locations and Themes is recorded on CRS' Contextual Safeguarding Module. This information is used by Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership in the Complex Adolescent Panel to inform strategic and operational disruption of harm to increase the safety of children more widely in Croydon.

10.A One Service approach – Responding to changes in vulnerability and risk

Children should receive a seamless service, even if their experiences of harm increase. We ensure children receive support and intervention that also accounts for how risk can quickly change:

For children who were not already open to Children's social care and a 'No Further Action' initial decision was made by MASH:

- If the child returns or is found and the initial MASH threshold decision of 'No Further Action' remains, please refer to section 9. Return Home Interviews.'
- If a child has been missing for 48 hours or more, the Missing Lead will inform MASH who will expedite the child's referral into Children's social care and trigger the Safer Plan on CRS. Please refer below to, 'For children already open to Children's social care.'
- Should the child or parent identify safeguarding concerns where a 'No Further Action' decision has been made when the return home interview is completed, the Adolescent Worker will inform the Missing Lead and MASH team of outcomes and make recommendations for support needed.

For children who are open to Early Help

Children who are open to Early Help services including Early Help or Croydon Local Intervention Programme sometimes require an escalation to a Social Work Team. The Team Manager for the child should request a step-up consultation with a Team Manager in MASH. The step-up consultation should be requested when a child has been missing 48 hours or where there are frequent or short missing episodes. The consultation should also consider indicators of harm, including familial abuse, parenting capacity, and extra familial risks known to be present for the child, including peer network, exploitation, serious violence.

11. Return home interviews

Return home interview process

Children who have been confirmed to have been found or returned home of their own accord will be assigned a return home interview. Confirmation of the missing episode can be informed by:

- Police Missing Merlin PAC report.
- Information shared via EDT.
- Information shared via the Daily Missing Meetings.
- Social worker or another professional informing the Performance and Business Intelligence Service Team and missing lead of the child's return.

A return home interview can only be assigned once the child's missing episode has been ended.

The episode will be ended by the Performance and Business Intelligence Service Team and assigned to the Missing team to assign to either a Social Worker or Adolescent Worker, to offer the RHI to the child and family.

All Return Home Interviews must be completed face to face. In exceptional circumstances this may not be possible, and therefore, clear management oversight must be added by the Team Manager to reflect the reasons why a return home interview cannot be convened face to face.

Return home interviews: Purpose

The purpose of the return home interview is to have a conversation to understand and address the reasons why a child or young person has run away; it should identify harm; help the child feel safe; provide them with information on how to stay safe; and allow professionals to identify actions to help them.

Although called an interview, the person completing the return home interview should approach it as an opportunity to have a conversation, demonstrating to the child or young person that they care for them, and want to support them, and want to hear their experiences and views on what is currently happening to them at home and in their community.

The return home interview should be seen as an intervention to inform future care and safety planning for the child and their family. The return home interview may identify additional information pertaining to the child and family that may trigger the need for an updated Child and Family Assessment. Return home interviews may also capture the cycle of missing patterns for the child and how this may impact on the child's safety and well-being, which in turn could inform an updated child and family assessment, plan, or decision making at Multi-agency Exploitation panel meetings (MACE) or National referral mechanism (NRM) Panel. It is also a vital process in hearing the child's voice and lived experiences.

The return home conversation must also establish the push and pull factors for the child who has been found from a missing period, and what the proposed response, will be needed to address the identified needs as well as trying to reduce future missing episodes. Should information be shared through an RHI, by children and families, who identifies potential victims, offenders, locations, and themes then this should also be recorded within the safer plan, so that this can be easily accessible by Children social care and Police in managing any future missing episodes for the child.

The Missing police must be sent any information pertaining to Victims Offenders locations and

themes via the appropriate email address.

All missing children will be offered an independent return home interview.

- Consideration should take place within the missing strategy meeting, to the professional network identifying who is best placed to offer the child an RHI e.g., Teacher, Youth Justice Service Worker, Designated Safeguarding Lead in School, Social Worker, Personal Advisor etc.
- Depending on whether a child has had a missing strategy meeting during a missing episode, consideration as to who is best placed to offer and complete the RHI will take place at the time of assigning the interview.
- If the child is not known to Children Social Care or the MASH recommendation is for the child and family to be referred to Croydon Local Intervention Programme or Early Help the RHI will be assigned to an Adolescent Worker on duty, for the child to be seen and a RHI completed within 72 hours of them having been found.
- If the child is open to Children's Social Care and open to any of the following services, Family Assessment Service, Social Work with Families or Young Croydon, the return home interview will be assigned to the child's social worker to offer and complete the RHI within 72 hours. If the child has an assigned Adolescent Worker in most circumstances the episode will be assigned to them to complete.
- For children looked after it is felt that RHI's should be completed by an Adolescent Worker, so that this is an independent return home conversation. However, there will be times where an RHI is offered by a social worker, due to circumstances including the expressed wishes of the child, or to avoid duplication if the social worker has already had the conversation with child and carers.
- In these instances, the Missing Lead or someone designated with the team will record the justification as to why the RHI has been assigned to the social worker or another professional.

At the time of allocation of the RHI the Missing Lead, or designated worker will notify the social worker, Adolescent worker, and their line manager, that the missing episode has been assigned for a return home conversation.

When children are looked after, the RHI should be undertaken by an independent professional who does not provide a caring role within the child or young person's placement. Unregulated placement (those not inspected by OFSTED) providers should not be completing RHI's with children or young people.

Only in exceptional circumstances should an RHI be completed by a child or young person's placement. However, it is recognised that the child or young person may only have a relationship with their key worker and therefore, in these circumstances, it is to be agreed within the missing strategy meeting.

There will be other professionals that have a trusted relationship with the child young person who are better placed to complete the RHI. It is therefore expected that if an external professional is completing the RHI, they follow the standardised form and upon completion, it is to be sent to the Missing Lead who will then review and upload onto CRS.

When contacting the child or young person and family or carer, the person conducting the RHI should take a bespoke approach to each child and young person, and not automatically ask if they would like an interview. Instead, begin rapport building with the child or young person.

- All RHIs will be inputted onto the RHI form on CRS by the assigned worker.
- Where a child or carer has declined a RHI this should be recorded clearly on the RHI form, so that this can be monitored, and we are able to understand reasons behind RHI's not being accepted.
- If the person conducting the RHI has identified any further safeguarding concerns after contact with the child or young person, they should contact the Missing Lead via the email address for a discussion as to whether a referral to MASH should be made or an intervention should be offered to the child or young person.
- If a child experiences missing regularly over a brief period, (e.g., three times within a week) then one interview can be completed to address all the missing episodes. However, all efforts should be made to speak to the child after each period that they are missing.
- Where the Missing Team Adolescent Worker has completed an RHI on behalf of an allocated Social Worker, it is imperative that the Missing Team & Allocated Team meet to share the outcome of the RHI, and this is to be recorded on CRS along with any actions the allocated team will be taking in response.

If the Missing Team is completing the RHI on behalf of another service there must be a discussion between the professional responsible for completing the RHI and the allocated worker and/or their manager.

12. Youth Justice

A percentage of children known to Children Social Care are also known to the Local Authorities Youth Justice Service. In instances of missing, it is important Social Workers communicate missing periods with the designated Youth Justice Officer and vice versa. Social Workers and Youth Justice Officers will need to provide each other with any updates including any communication with the child and details of meetings such as strategy meetings and when the child returns details of the return home interview.

In instances where the child is missing for a period of 48 hours and is subject to a statutory Court Order, the Youth Justice Service must consider whether a warrant is required. This is of particular use when the child is felt to pose risk to others and self. The Youth Justice Service will prepare paperwork notifying the Court, and request a warrant is issued. The Youth Justice Service will decide whether the warrant is backed with bail (arrested and released with a date to return to Court) or not backed with bail (a young person taken directly to Court following arrest). The Youth Justice Service will need to prepare a report for the Court in anticipation of the child's arrest during this time and ensure that the professional network (including YJ officer and Social Worker) have collaboratively created a contingency plan when the child is located.

13. UASC who experience Missing

When an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child is missing for 24 hours a strategy meeting is to be requested to take place no later than 72 hours (sooner if child is considered high risk). All missing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children should be referred to the London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC) within 24 hours of a missing notification being received this will trigger a National Missing UASC notification. All referrals should be emailed to the below with the child's, name, date of birth, asylum status and date of missing episode.

lascddata@westminster.gov.uk

gashaye@westminster.gov.uk

The strategy Meeting must be attended by appropriate staff from both SCS and the Police. This Strategy meeting should elicit clear actions being taken in respect of the missing child, in line with the Croydon Missing Procedures.

Whilst the child remains missing, his/her case should be identified as "open" on CRS and must be reviewed on a monthly basis until 6 months, when this will reduce to 3 monthly intervals.

Review Timetable

When to Review	Action to be Taken	By Whom
Weekly review strategy meeting – before 28 days	Strategy Meeting to be convened and chaired by the Service Manager.	Social Worker, senior police and Service Manager
Monthly Review Strategy Meeting	Child missing after 28 days up to 6 months. If child not found, case to remain open on manager's work tray.	Social Worker and Team Manager
6 Monthly Audit	Audit to ensure that all actions are being taken to recover the child, in light of any new information / events.	Service Manager
3 Monthly Review Strategy Meeting	3 monthly review strategy meeting to continue after the initial 6 monthly audit with regards to any new information.	Social Worker and Team Manager

6 Monthly Audit	Audit to ensure that all actions are being taken to recover the child, in light of any new information/events. At this point the Service Manager should make a judgement whether to continue monitoring on a 3 or 6 monthly basis.	Service Manager
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14. Emergency Duty Team

In most cases, EDT are notified about care experienced children who have gone missing from their placement. EDT may also receive notification about a missing or found child from the Police. Day teams are responsible for alerting EDT to any missing children who may come to the attention of EDT if found. The day team EDT alert should include details of what actions EDT are required to undertake if the child is found.

Where EDT is notified that a child has gone missing and/or been found, EDT to e-mail missingchildren@croydon.gov.uk for the Missing Episode to be triggered the next working day.

EDT will then review the information to determine if any actions are required out of hours to ensure the child's safety.

For children going missing from placement, it is essential that the placement notifies EDT of:

- Date and time the child has gone missing and/or been found
- Location they went missing from and/or location they were found
- Time child was reported missing to the Police, including details of CAD number
- Any known risks related to the missing episode
- If the child has returned, any concerns raised regarding their presentation or disclosures/information shared from their missing episode
- Any actions required from EDT

It is important that the placement is clear if the information is being shared for information purposes or for specific actions from EDT. Not all missing notifications will require EDT action. Where the notification is not clear, EDT will need to contact the placement to clarify these details. If the placement has not reported the child missing to the Police, EDT should advise the placement of the need to do so.

If EDT are notified by the Police of a child who has gone missing but been found, EDT need to gather and record the following details:

- Date and time the child has gone missing and/or been found
- Location they went missing from and/or location they were found
- Details of the Police Safe & Well check, including any reported concerns regarding their presentation or disclosures/information shared from their missing episode

In all cases where EDT are notified about a child who has gone missing or been found, the EDT social worker should review CRS for details about the child, including any known risks or safety plans.

For children missing from placement, the EDT worker should review the information provided by the placement.

If the notification is for information sharing only and the EDT worker does not identify any additional risks or safeguarding actions needed, the EDT social worker will ensure that the notification is recorded on a CRS Case Note. The EDT must include a brief outline of their risk assessment.

If the notification is unclear, or if the placement is raising concerns about the young person, the EDT social worker should contact the placement to clarify details and concerns regarding the missing episode and any actions required by EDT. For children who have been found, consideration should be given as to whether an RHI is needed. EDT case recording should be clear as to the discussion, risk assessment and agreed outcome or actions.

Where EDT is notified by the Police regarding a missing child, EDT should contact the Police to clarify the details as outlined above. EDT should share all relevant background information about the child and agree with the Police any safeguarding actions required. This will include (but is not limited to):

- If a missing Strategy Discussion is required (High/Significant Risk of harm and/or Critical Incident).
- If child is suspected to have suffered Significant Harm/involved in critical incident who will be responsible out of hours to complete the Return Home Interview.
- Decisions on where the child can go e.g., can they return home/to placement or if alternative arrangements are needed.
- Anyone else in the child's network that needs to be informed about the missing episode out of hours.

All EDT recording related to missing children should include:

- Details of the missing notification, to include when the child went missing and where the child went missing from.
- If the child has returned or been found, details of when the child was found and where they were located
- Risk assessment related to the missing episode
- Actions undertaken by EDT

15. Children Living in Croydon placed by another Local Authority

Children living in Croydon but who have been placed here by another Local Authority can also experience Missing Episodes. Upon receipt of a Police Merlin, MASH send the Police Merlin to the

Missing Lead and Performance and Business Intelligence Service Team as well as the allocated Social Worker in the host authority. If the Social Worker is not known, MASH liaise with the Police to collect these details so the Police Merlin can be sent, along with a request for the responsible authority to send the completed Return Home Interview for intelligence and Information Sharing Purposes. This activity is to be recorded on CRS.

16. Recording

- All missing episodes received via Police and Emergency Duty Team (EDT) will be processed via MASH and sent to the **Performance and Business Intelligence Service Team** via the Missing Children and Missing Police Merlin inboxes so they can create/start missing episode flags on CRS.
- **Performance and Business Intelligence Service Team** will create the Missing Episode and send an alert to the allocated social worker, Team Manager and Missing Lead notifying them that the child is actively missing.
- **Performance and Business Intelligence Service Team** will produce weekly and monthly performance and intelligence data to highlight outstanding missing processes, and provide strategic oversight, to Senior Leaders, Service Managers, Team Managers, and the Missing Lead.
- They will also ensure that Missing Children are flagged for Complex Adolescent Panel/ MACE Consideration where there are missing episodes involving an arrest or where a child is identified as at risk of exploitation.
- Social workers should record all missing work via the missing pathway on CRS.
- Finalised missing episodes can be reviewed by accessing the missing pathway through the child's CRS casefile by clicking in the 'MISP' marker. The most recent missing episode will be at the top of the child's missing chronology. In each missing episode, reviewers will be able to see all relevant documentation in one place, including Strategy Meeting minutes and Return Home Interviews.

If you require further assistance with the process and recording for missing children, please contact missingchildren@croydon.gov.uk who will assist.

Appendix A: Missing Strategy Discussion Preparation Template for Schools.

Name:

DOB:

Date of Strategy Discussion:

School Name:

Staff attending:

What is the child YP's attendance and punctuality?	
Are there any identified patterns of absence from school?	
What has been done to manage the attendance of the child YP?	
How does the child YP present in school? <i>May include physical presentation as well as behaviour and engagement with learning</i>	
What is the child YP's peer and adult relationships like in school?	
Are there any concerns about the child YP's relationship with their parents? <i>This may be observations or something they have shared.</i>	
Has the child YP spoken about any friends/groups out of school? If so have they mentioned any names?	
Does the school have any safeguarding concerns for the child YP? <i>This may include historical concerns or worries which may have not met threshold for referrals</i>	
Has there been any concerns raised about exploitation? If so, please give detail.	

Appendix B: Strategy Meeting Agenda

Agenda Item	
1	Introductions, apologies, status (initial/review), confidentiality etc
2	Review of previous actions (review only)
3	Information on child/ren and family and presenting risks, including history of missing episodes and background of child
4	Current concerns, child protection indicators
5	Additional risk factors including CSE/offending/abduction abroad/substance misuse/gang association
6	Young person's views (obtained from previous work completed, previous RHIs)
7	Parental involvement/notification/views/response to current concerns
8	Missing risk assessment
9	Current police risk level (low, medium, high), rationale for this level and when it was last reviewed/will next be reviewed
11	<p>Professional Safety Planning to manage immediate risk, including as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visits to known addresses (ensure that details of friends are shared appropriately); - Contacting the child & family/ friends, parents, and professionals. - Police- tracing of phone, social networking sites and oyster card. - Use of the media to publicise details of the case (consent from parents/HoS to publish photo) - Use of orders if appropriate (also consider powers available to Youth Justice) - Consideration of referral to panels? (ie. CAP, NRM) - Agree who will complete Missing Briefing (to be sent to Missing Lead for review and escalation to senior management). - Complete National Alerts – hospitals, other LA's, other Police Forces BTP - Do the Gangs Team have knowledge of the child/child's associates? - Safer Plan to be completed/updated to reflect agreed family & professional actions.
12	<p>Plans once the child is located including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the safe and well check and return home interviews (who will complete) (and how these will be shared with the professional network) - medical attention - social work visits & Intervention to reduce likelihood of further missing episodes. - Referral to services? (WGN, Barnardos, Missing People etc) - Updated Safer Plan to include responses to information shared at Return Home Interview & any other known risks.
13	Summary, Decisions and next meeting date

Appendix C: Croydon Missing Children: - Daily Partnership Missing meetings

Title: Terms of reference (15 July 2023)

Purpose

The purpose of Daily missing meetings to have a multi-agency and operational response to Croydon's missing children. The meetings will be held daily and have a core membership from Children social care, Health, Education, Police, and Youth Justice. The meetings will promote rapid response to children who experience missing as a result of Vulnerability, harm within the home and those who experience extra familiar harm in the places and spaces within their communities., The focus will be on safeguarding and promoting a reduction in risk for children experiencing missing. The group will also consider ways in which the disruption of identified adults who are displaying harm to children, can be stopped. It will also capture identifiable intelligence, including themes, locations and feed into wider safeguarding of vulnerable children.

Aims

1. Reduce risk of vulnerable children who are experiencing missing.
2. Increase safety and well-being of children who are experiencing missing either due to harm within the home, or in the community.
3. Consider those who may pose a risk to a child and consider ways in which this harm can be disrupted, through orders or other proactive responses.
4. Provide reliable and up to date intelligence for children experiencing missing and exploitation, that will be fed into the contextual module and follow the adopted VOLT (Victim Offenders Location Themes)
5. Promote best practice is upheld.
6. Improve adherence to statutory timeframes.
7. Improve compliance with corporate Key Performance Indicators

Membership:

- Core membership will include, Missing Team, MASH, Data and Performance, Education, Health, Youth Justice and Police.

Accountability:

- Individual group members are responsible for completing the necessary research prior to the daily missing meeting

- Individual group members are responsible for reporting back on research carried out each day and outcomes, of intervention offered.
- Where a member cannot attend a daily meeting where possible another professional from core membership will attend on behalf of that team or organisation.

Review:

- The meetings will be reviewed on a minimum of once a quarter and will review the relevance and value of its work and the terms of reference.

Meetings

- Meetings will be held on a daily basis via MS teams.
- One day per week there will be a weekly meeting to consider, Victims, Offenders, Locations and Themes, that have been discussed during the week.
- Meetings will be organised by a service co-ordinator and be chaired by a Service manager Team manager or senior practitioner.
- Minutes will be recorded by a service Co-ordinator and case notes will be added to each child's CRS file by a qualified social worker or Adolescent worker.
- Minutes will be distributed via secure email on a daily basis and reviewed at the next meeting.
- The Daily Missing Report will be sent by an automated email each day via Business Objects based on the Data Warehouse upload at 5pm the previous day. It will be the responsibility of all to review and complete research before and during the meetings, so agreed actions can be implemented.

Definition of terms

- **Daily missing meeting**

A regular meeting held between Monday and Thursday to discuss missing children.

- **Weekly missing meeting**

A meeting held once per week.

- **Missing child**

Any individual under the age of 18 who's location is not known and where they are away from their expected residence or educational provision.

- **Daily Missing Record (DMR)**

A list of children who were reported as being missing or away from placement without authorisation as of 5pm the previous day, to the day the report was received.

- **Child Missing from Education**

Children missing education (CME) is defined as those who are of a compulsory school age but are either not registered at a school or else not receiving suitable education in place of a school setting.

- **EHCP**

Educational Health Care Plan

- **MACE**

Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol/Panel

- **RHI**

Return home interview. All missing children should be offered a return home interview within 72 hours of them having been found or returning home or to placement.

Appendix D: Missing Briefing Template

Childs details

Name:

Age:

CRS number:

Child's Status:

NRM referral reference number (if relevant):

Social Worker details

Name:

Team:

Team Manager:

Brief summary of the child's missing experience

Involved professionals: -

What is being done to find the child (actions completed and in progress)

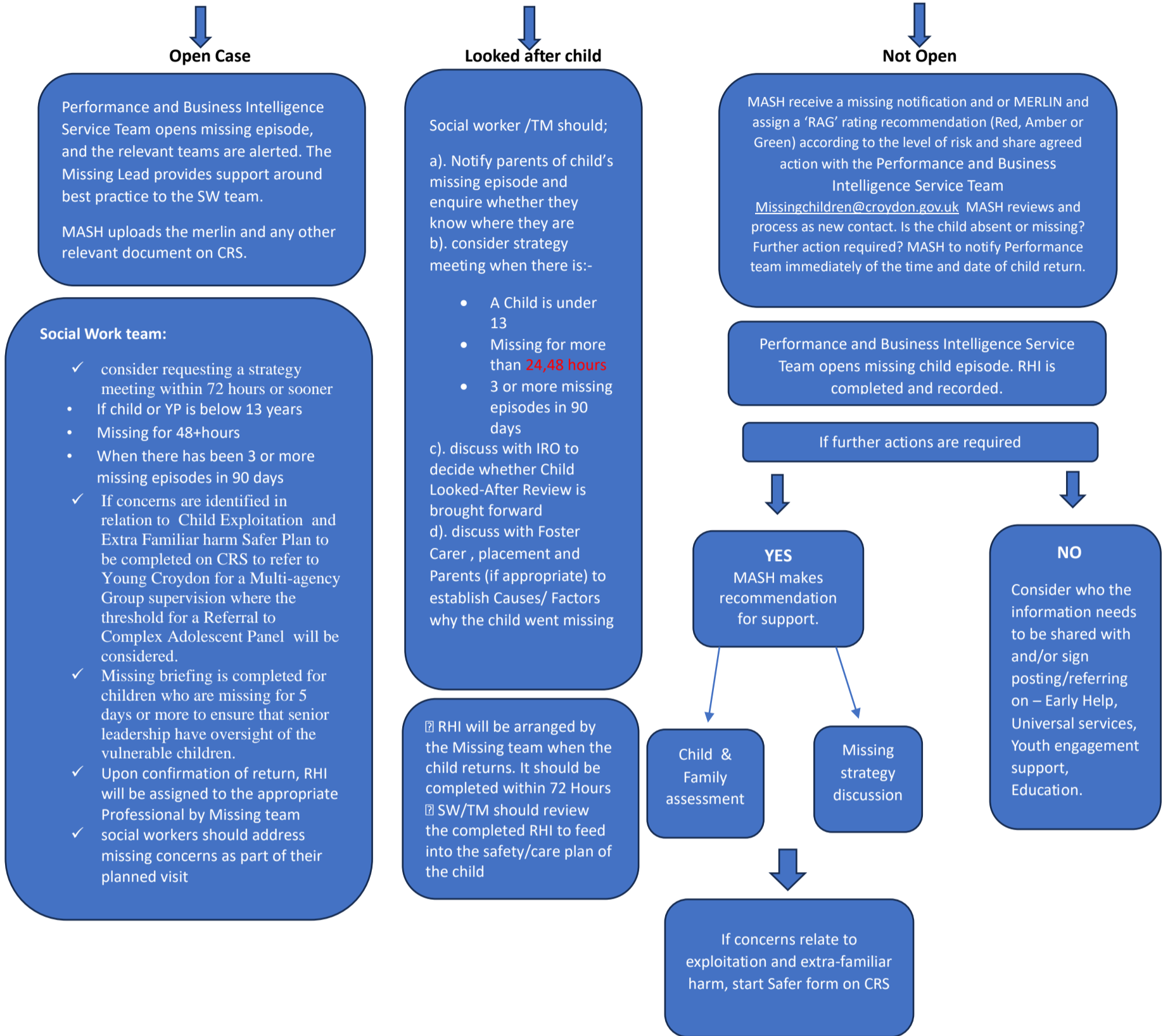
Any blockages or challenges:

What is the safety plan when the child is found?

Additionally, if you have any information around other Victims, Offenders, Locations or Themes, please detail here:

Appendix E: Missing Children and Young People: Flowchart of Process and Responsibility in Croydon CSC.

Police send the Merlin of a child reported as missing to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. A Multi-agency Missing meeting is held every **workday at 10am** to ensure that all children who are actively missing, or who have returned home, receive a multi-agency response to increase their safety. This involves Children Missing Education, Early help, Youth Justice and services from the voluntary and community sector. Information shared around victims, offenders, location, themes is used to increase safety in the wider community.



Media Coverage

If there is a high level of risk, the police may consider using media coverage – this will be discussed with parents and Head of Service in advance. If a child:-

- Lives at home, the decision will be taken by police in consultation with the parents
- Is S20 accommodated, a joint decision will be taken by police and the HOS, following consultation with CSC and the child's parents
- Is on a Care Order, the HOS will make the decision but will inform the child's parents if this is in the child's best interest