



Children and Young People who go Missing from Home and Care.

Joint protocol - August 2017

Between: North Yorkshire County Council
and North Yorkshire Police

Endorsed by: North Yorkshire Safeguarding
Children Partnership

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Author	Allan Harder– North Yorkshire Police Danielle Johnson - North Yorkshire County Council James Parkes – North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board

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1. Introduction

We all have a responsibility to safeguard the young and vulnerable.

When a child or young person goes missing or runs away they are at risk. This protocol has been developed to ensure a consistent approach across all agencies and in response to the Statutory Guidance (2014)¹ Children who run away or go missing from care or home. The newly issued College of Policing² policy recommends a continuum of risk rather than a simple 'missing or absent' dichotomy (November 2016) As this has been adopted by North Yorkshire Police since 21st March 2017 reporting across York and North Yorkshire (including reports to the LSCBs or new 'Safeguarding Partnerships') will be disaggregated across this risk continuum (i.e. no apparent risk, low risk, medium risk, high risk.)

APP College of Policing (2017) Missing People gives the definition of missing as:

'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed. 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.'³

This protocol relates to all children and young people in North Yorkshire who run away and go missing from home or care. This includes children and young people looked after by another Local Authority and placed in a home, care or residential school within North Yorkshire. Additionally, the protocol applies in parts to children and young people looked after by NYCC and placed in home, care or residential school outside of North Yorkshire.

The protocol does not provide for situations where a child has been abducted or forcibly removed from their place of residence. This is a "crime in action" and should be reported to the Police immediately. This document should be read as guidance, which cannot anticipate every situation. Police, Children and Families staff and foster carers should use their professional judgment to take any action they feel necessary to protect the safety of the child based on an assessment of risk for each individual child.

1.1 Risks faced by young people who go missing

All agencies in contact with children and young people need to be aware of the potential risks young people face when they go missing, whether from home or care.

Children may run away from a problem such as abuse, neglect or being challenged at home, or may run away to somewhere they want to be and/or someone with whom they want to be. They may have been coerced into running away by someone else. There are particular concerns about the links between children running away/going missing and the risks of child sexual exploitation (CSE)⁴.

The risks faced by young people are the same regardless of how often they have run away from home. However, younger children and those who run away often, may be more likely to face serious, long term problems.

The immediate risks associated with running away include:

- No means of support or legitimate income – leading to high risk activities;
- Possible involvement in criminal activities;
- Becoming a victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation;

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf

² <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/>

³ <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

- Alcohol and substance misuse;
- Deterioration of physical and mental/emotional health;
- Loss of education and training;
- Inappropriate/manipulative/exploitive relationships.

Longer term risks include:

- Long-term substance dependency;
- Involvement in crime;
- Involvement in sexual exploitation into adulthood;
- Homelessness.

It is vital that the missing episode itself is not seen as a discrete incident but as a symptom of other ongoing issues. It is important to deal with the missing episode, locate the missing person and ensure they return safe and well. However it should not stop there; as ongoing work to identify the causes of missing incidents and preventing them reoccurring is as vital. Individual organisations need to highlight and flag children who go missing on their agency information management systems to ensure services can work to keep the individual safe should they run away or go missing again.

Children with mental or emotional health needs, learning and physical disabilities are particularly vulnerable when they go missing. They may have communication difficulties and fewer opportunities to disclose reasons for running away. They are also far more at risk of sexual or other exploitation.

1.2 The over-arching aims, purpose and legal background of the protocol

There are 4 main aims to which all agencies, statutory or voluntary sector, should work collectively to deliver. These are:

Prevent – reducing the number of children and young people who go missing – through prevention strategies, education work and early intervention in cases of repeated missing episodes and patterns.

Protect – reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing – by ensuring local agencies provide a tailored, risk based response and work together to find the person, to investigate cases and causes, sharing key information.

Prepare – providing missing children and young people and their families/carers with support and guidance – by referring promptly to other agencies (if appropriate) and ensuring they understand how and where to access help and support.

Pursue – investigating each episode of missing to understand the causes and to establish reasons for it. Where criminality is identified, ensuring that investigation, and disruption, of the criminal activity takes place.

Legal Issues

Professionals should refer to the following for guidance in relation to missing children and young people:

- Department for Education Statutory Guidance on Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and related statutory guidance (2018)
- Child Sexual Exploitation – definition and guide for practitioners DfE (2017)

2. Key Roles

The Local Authority Designated Manager for missing children are:

Danielle Johnson North Yorkshire County Council, Head of Safeguarding

Danielle.Johnson@northyorks.gov.uk 01609 5349232

Allan Harder, North Yorkshire Police, Detective Superintendent, Public Protection / Safeguarding Lead

Allan.Harder@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk 101

The Designated manager for missing children is responsible for:

- Managing the local authority "missing from care" protocols and procedures
- Reporting information about patterns in regard to children and young people who run away and are reported missing to the Director of Children's Services (NYCC) to the respective elected members responsible for "corporate parenting"
- Monitoring policies and data relating to children missing from home or care including the facilitation of return interviews.

The North Yorkshire Police via the Vulnerability Assessment Team (VAT), North Yorkshire County Councils Safeguarding Unit and Children and Families Service have responsibility for:

- Maintaining and improving links with local services for missing children and young people
- Informing Children's Social Care of reported cases of missing
- Developing specialist skills and knowledge about children and young people who run away
- Providing a consistent and efficient response.

The North Yorkshire Police VAT and NYCC Designated Managers for missing children are key to the processes outlined in this protocol. Each ensures that records of notifications are made on their agency databases and there is a timely and efficient exchange of information about children between the two agencies.

3. WHEN A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON GOES MISSING

3.1 Responsibilities of the reporting individual

Before contacting the Police – proactive attempts to locate the child or young person must be made.

When a child or young person is identified as not being at a location they are expected to be at, the reporting individual (for example a parent/care provider/foster carer/social worker/residential staff/teacher etc.) must take proactive steps to trace the child or young person's whereabouts prior to contacting the police and keep a record of these enquiries so they can pass on the information.

Proactive attempts to locate the child or young person should include:

- Physical checks of the residence, including the child's bedroom and any other location the child may be hiding within the house/building.
- Physical checks of any garden, garage, sheds, grounds and surrounding area(s).
- Attempting to contact the missing person directly, via mobile phone, text, or social networking sites (i.e. Twitter/ Facebook/WhatsApp etc.).

- Contacting the missing child or young person's wider family and friends to ascertain if the child or young person is there or has made contact with them.

Additionally, where a child or young person is in the care of the local authority, the reporting Individual should:

- Make reference to any risk assessments, Care Plans, Placement Plans or other planning documents in place that refer to the needs of the young person and in particular may detail the management of the risk that the child or young person may go missing.

Where such enquiries do not establish the whereabouts of the child or young person, the reporting individual should report the incident to the Police. For children and young people who reside within North Yorkshire, including children and young people placed by another Local Authority within North Yorkshire, this will be North Yorkshire Police. Unless, there is deemed a serious concern or risk of immediate harm which would require a 999 response, this should be done through 101.

Where a child or young person is placed in another Local Authority area by NYCC, the contact will be the police force covering the area of their placement.

If there has been no need to contact the Police, and the child is in the care of the local authority details of the incident should be recorded in full, according to the appropriate Children's Social Care protocols and dealt with as part of the existing care plan.

Notifying relevant others of the incident

Where a child or young person is in the care of the local authority, the reporting individual i.e. foster carer or residential home should also ensure that the following are contacted as soon as is practicable after the child or young person is not where they are expected to be:

- The Local Authority responsible for the child's placement.
- If appropriate e.g. delegated responsibility, adults with parental responsibility for the child or young person

'Concern for Welfare'

If there is concern for the welfare/safety of a child, they may be reported as a child at risk of harm; for example, where a child is staying over and refusing to leave a house where there is known drug dealing, or in the residence of a known sex offender. In these types of scenarios, the child would not be classed as missing. There would need to be a concern for the child's safety and as such reported this way to the Police in a balanced and proportionate way.

3.2 Response from North Yorkshire Police

This section of the protocol details the response from North Yorkshire Police to reports of children and young people who are missing. Where a report is made to another Police force, reference should be made to the missing from home or care protocol (it is likely that this is to be found on the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's website).

North Yorkshire Police priorities:

The priorities of the police in responding to reports of missing persons are:

- To ensure that every report of a missing person is risk assessed so that those who may be vulnerable or represent high risk are immediately identified;
- To investigate reports of missing persons;
- To adopt a pro-active multi agency approach in dealing with missing persons;

- To support the needs of the family, those close to the missing person, and the community.

North Yorkshire Police Risk Assessment

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.

When North Yorkshire Police (NYP) are informed of an incident, they will confirm the level on the ‘missing’ continuum they consider to be appropriate. This will be based on an assessment of risk.

The Force Incident Manager (FIM) will determine the level of risk. In doing so the FIM will:

- Take account of the antecedents known about the individual, including any partnership information available;
- Be cognisant of national best practice and APP guidance;
- Take account of the presenting circumstances of the current incident and any reasonably foreseeable future risks

Additionally, where a child has learning disability, the level of risk will include a consideration of their level of development and functioning rather than of their chronological age.

For children in the care of the local authority, staff reporting the incident (including foster carers) should have the Care and Placement Plan to hand if they have access to this. The responses to these questions will be recorded by the call-taker on the occurrence record.

The outcomes of the risk assessment will be the guide for the police response and the level of enquiries undertaken. The Police investigation will be carried out in accordance with the North Yorkshire Police Missing Persons Policy. The NYP investigation will be in line with the NYP risk assessment framework as detailed below.

The risk assessment framework used by the Police:

No apparent risk (absent)	
There is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public.	Actions to locate the subject and/or gather further information should be agreed with the informant and a latest review time set to reassess the risk.
Low risk	
The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.	Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm.
Medium risk	
The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.	This category requires an active and measured response by the police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting.

High risk	
<p>The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely.</p>	<p>This category almost always requires the immediate deployment of police resources – action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness. A member of the senior management team must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an investigating officer (IO) and possibly an SIO, and a police search adviser (PoISA).</p> <p>There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate. The MPB should be notified of the case without undue delay. Children’s services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.</p>

Where a child or young person is determined to be MISSING

An investigation will commence which will be reviewed on a regular basis. Enquiries will continue as required until the child or young person is located. A Police Supervisor will review daily the action taken.

3.3 Police Notification to others of a missing child or young person

Notification to the relevant Local Authority for the child or young person

All incidents of children and young people reported as missing to North Yorkshire Police will be reported by the Police to the relevant Local Authority. Every Local Authority has different notification pathways based on local arrangements.

NYCC Notification Pathway	
Circumstances of Child or Young Person	Notification Contact Details
<p>For a child or young person living within the Local Authority area of NYCC, including those placed in North Yorkshire by another Local Authority.</p>	<p>NYCC Safeguarding Unit safeguardingunit@northyorks.gov.uk 01609 532477</p>
<p>For a child or young person ‘looked after’ by NYCC and placed in another Local Authority area.</p>	

The Local Authority will then ensure appropriate forward communication, including Missing Persons coordinator (NYCC), allocated Social Worker, Manager and Independent Reviewing Officer.

Notification to other Agency Partners

It is for the relevant Local Authority Children’s Social Care to notify agency partners of the missing episode including any education facilities that the child is involved with.

Notification to the Media

North Yorkshire Police will advise the media and request their assistance (after appropriate consultation with parents/guardians and/or the Local Authority) in certain circumstances, after a thorough risk assessment has been conducted. All appropriate media should be considered to assist in the swift and safe return of the child or young person.

4. When children and young people are found – Location and Return

It is important that there are processes in place for when missing children and young people are located. This is so an understanding can be gained of the reasons for those missing episodes and any issues that may have caused them can be addressed, as well as protecting the child or young person from future harm.

The approach of professionals, such as police officers and social workers, towards a child or young person who has been missing can have a significant impact on how the child or young person will engage with subsequent investigations and protection planning. However “streetwise” they may appear, they are children and may be extremely vulnerable to multiple risks. A supportive approach, actively listening and responding to a child or young person’s needs, will have a greater chance of preventing the child or young person from going missing again and safeguarding them against other risks.

Location and Return of a ‘MISSING’ child or young person

When a child or young person who has been reported to the Police and deemed, following risk assessment, as ‘Missing’, returns or is located and returned to a safe place other than by the Police, the Police should be notified as soon as possible by the parent or carer that the episode is over. At the point of reporting a return, parents or carers will be asked if there is anything the Police need to know or act on immediately in terms of the child and young person’s behaviour or welfare. The Police will arrange for a ‘Safe & Well Check’ to be conducted.

If a missing child or young person is in the care of the local authority, upon location by police or others, it is the responsibility of the residential staff or foster carers to collect and return the child or young person to a place of safety, unless the circumstances pose a risk to them or to the child or young person. The Police only have powers to return a young person to care if they are subject to a Care Order or the circumstances are such that a Police Protection is required.

Where there is no risk to a parent or carer collecting a child or young person, but the logistics make it difficult or impossible for the parent or carer to do so, the responsible Local Authority for the child or young person must be contacted to assist

The use of Police Protection Powers

Where a Police Officer locates a missing child or young person and has reasonable cause to believe that the child or young person would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, the Officer may take the child into Police Protection (Sect. 46 Children Act 1989) and return them to a place of safety.

Where a missing child or young person is subject to a Care Order

When a child or young person is a is subject to a Care Order, the child or young person can be returned to their placement unless it would not be safe for them to do so in which case it will be discussed with the responsible Local Authority to establish an immediate course of action

Transport of the child or young person back to the placement (or place of safety) is dependent upon who located the child or young person. The following expectations are:

- If physically located by North Yorkshire Police, the child or young person is to be returned by the police to their placement (or place of safety)
- If physically located by another statutory agency (Social Worker/EDT/care provider (including foster carer), the locating agency/individual must return the child or young person to their placement (or place of safety)
- If physically located by family/friends, the carers are to advise them that the missing child or young person should be returned to their placement (place of safety) at the earliest opportunity and assist them in doing so if necessary.
- If located by other means (e.g. telephone) the responsible Local Authority should facilitate the collection and return of the missing child or young person to their placement (or place of safety).

Where a missing child or young person is Looked After under Section 20 (Voluntary Care)

When a child or young person is reported missing from a placement and is accommodated under Section 20 Children Act 1989 (where the Local Authority cares for the child with the consent of those with parental responsibility and does not have parental responsibility itself), the police have no power to return the child or young person to their placement (or place of safety) without their consent. In such circumstances, the child or young person should be actively encouraged to return. If the child or young person refuses to consent, the police will assess whether there are safeguarding concerns for their welfare and/or in connection with the circumstances (or location) at which they have been found.

Where a child or young person is located by an agency or individual other than an agent of the police, the following action should be taken:

- Immediately notify the carer of where the child or young person has been located.
- Provide details of any concerns to the carer.
- Agree with the carer an immediate action plan to safeguard the child or young person until such time as the carer can arrange for the child or young person to be collected.
- Notify the police of the individual's location and any concerns they may have in order that the police can consider use of Police Protection powers and complete a 'Safe and Well Check' (SWC).

4.1 The Police Safe and Well Check

Safe and Well Checks for Missing Children and Young People

When a child or young person has been located following an episode deemed 'Missing', statutory guidance requires that *'The police will undertake a safe and well check to establish whether there are any indications that the child has suffered harm, where and with whom they have been, and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by or against them'*.

North Yorkshire Police will carry out a Safe and Well Check for all children and young people who have been categorised as 'missing', as soon as practicable after they are found and this should be completed within 24 hours of the person being located. The details will be recorded on the Missing Person Report and passed on to the relevant Local Authority. The exception to this will be those who were risk assessed as no apparent risk.

Objectives of a North Yorkshire Police Safe and Well Check

A Safe and Well Check requires a Police Officer to physically see and speak to the missing child or young person as soon as possible after they are found. The police should also speak to the child or young person's parents or carers to satisfy themselves that the child or young person is safe. A Safe and Well Check will be recorded on the

Police 'Management of Return' online document and information shared with the Children and Families Service.

The objectives of a North Yorkshire Police Safe and Well Check will be:

- To determine the reasons why the child or young person went missing and in particular, if they have been subject to violence, exploitation, abuse or bullying;
- To establish if they have been the victim of, or committed, any crime whilst missing;
- To discover where and by whom they have been harboured (Refer to North Yorkshire);
- To obtain information which may lead to their early location should they disappear again;
- To put in place any support and preventative measures to avoid such a recurrence;
- To inform the child or young person and their parents and carers, if appropriate, that:
 - the relevant Local Authority Children's Social Care has been notified of the missing episode
 - they will be contacted by the Local Authority and offered an Independent Return Interview.

4.2 The Return Interview

Statutory guidance requires that whenever a missing child is located and returned, they must be offered an independent return interview by the responsible Local Authority. Independent return interviews provide an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect children and young people from all the associated risk of going missing again. This process is distinct from a police Safe and Well Check (which is not designed, or often best placed, to explore the causes. It should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting.

The interview should be held in a neutral place where the child or young person feels safe, comfortable and able to talk openly. When the child or young person is in the care of the Local Authority, where possible, the Independent Return Interview should take place before they return to their placement.

Purpose of the Independent Return Interview

The interview should:

- Identify and deal with any harm the child or young person has suffered – including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the 'Safe and Well Check' – either before they ran away or whilst missing;
- Understand, and try to address, the reasons why the child or young person went missing;
- Help the child or young person feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away;
- Provide them with information on how to stay safe if they choose to go missing again, including helpline numbers.

Who should undertake the Independent Return Interview?

The Independent Return Interview should be carried out by someone who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow-up any actions that emerge.

All Local Authorities are obliged to ensure that the interviewer is independent of the care of the child and, for children in care, the placement, save where a child or young person has a strong relationship with a carer or social worker and has expressed a preference to talk to them, rather than an independent person, about the reasons they went missing. Additionally, all children and young people who are looked after should be offered

an Independent Return Interview should be offered the option of speaking to an independent advocate.

NYCC Independent Return Interview Arrangements	
Circumstances of Child or Young Person	Return Interviewer
For a child or young person living within the Local Authority area of North Yorkshire County Council and not an open case to Children’s Social Care	NYCC Prevention Service will undertake this interview
Children In Need, Children Protection	Children’s Social Care. The interview will be conducted by a qualified Social Worker who is not the allocated worker in order to offer some Independence to the assessment unless there is a suitable professional that the child would prefer.
For a child or young person ‘looked after’ by NYCC, even where a child or young person is placed in another Local Authority area	All Looked After Children will be offered a representative from the independent advocacy service. A NYAS advocate’s role is to represent the child entirely and therefore where a young person requests to speak with an independent advocate present, this will be supported. NYAS details below: https://www.nyas.net/ Tel: 0808 808 1001
Looked After Children placed in North Yorkshire by another Authority	The home Authority will be responsible for making arrangements for the return interview.

When a child refuses an offer of an Independent Return Interview or refuses to engage in an Interview

Where children refuse to engage with the independent interviewer, a record of the offer and reasons for refusal should be recorded. Parents and carers should be offered the opportunity to provide any relevant information and intelligence of which they may be aware. This should help to prevent further instances of the child running away and identify early the support needed for them.

Record of the Independent Return Interview

A record of the Independent Return interview should be made using the relevant Local Authority pro forma. An Independent Return Interview should:

- Identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered – including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the ‘safe and well check’ – either before they ran away or whilst missing
- Understand and try to address the reasons why the child ran away
- Help the child/young person understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away
- Provide them with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers Further support and/or action in accordance with Working Together To Safeguard Children

Information sharing following an Independent Return Interview

At the start of the Independent Return Interview, the child or young person and their parents or carers should be informed that the information from the meeting will be shared with relevant professionals, who will work with them to keep them safe unless there are reasons not to do so. If the child or young person, parent or carer refuses

to consent to the information being shared, the interview should not progress. Consent to share information is not required if there is a sufficient safeguarding concern for the child or young person even if consent is withdrawn at the end of the interview.

It is crucial that any information gained through this interview in relation to safeguarding, locations, intelligence etc. is fed back to the police. Information sharing at this stage is vital for future safeguarding and gives assistance to the police should future missing episodes occur. Information from the Independent Return Interview must be sent to the North Yorkshire Vulnerability Assessment Team missingfromhome@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk by e-mail within 24 hours of the return interview taking place.

It is important that any refusal by the young person and/or their carers either to having a return interview, or to the sharing of information with other agencies should be recorded.

Any personal confidential information which indicates that support for the young person may be helpful should be noted and an appropriate referral made e.g. a referral to sexual health services.

5. Additional Processes

Where a child or young person is missing for over 24 hours

Where a looked after child goes missing for a period of over 24 hours a Social Worker is required to notify the NYCC Head of Safeguarding and Assistant Director responsible for Children and Families Service using the Notification form (Appendix 3).

Where a child or young person is missing for over 48 hours

If the child or young person has not been located within 48 hours, a multi-agency Strategy Discussion must be considered by the responsible Local Authority. Where the child is placed by a responsible Local Authority in another local authority area (host), it will be for the responsible Local Authority to make a safeguarding referral to the host Local Authority Children's Social Care requesting a Strategy Discussion.

Additional Multi agency responses

In addition the above processes NYCC are able to:

- hold locality Hub meetings to share information with multiagency partners and form a plan to locate the young person
- Utilise the expertise NYCC CSE and Vulnerability Coordinator
- Review cases within the MAST daily VEMT and DA meetings
- Utilise the local VPG meetings to explore themes, trends and community responses

5.1 Additional Procedures – Care Homes / Foster Homes

Care Homes and Foster Homes, irrespective of whether they are Local Authority or private, must ensure that they notify their local Children's Social Care and the North Yorkshire Police VAT of all new placements at their establishment from other area Local Authorities.

Initial risk assessment for children and young people in the care of the local authority

If the child or young person appears likely to run away, their Social Worker will decide whether a risk assessment should take place. This will be within 1 week of the placement starting.

This should be completed:

- In children's homes (LA or private) by a member of residential staff.
- In foster homes by the child's Social Worker.

The risk assessment should include:

- Parents/previous carers advice on what action should be taken if the child goes missing;
- Nature and level of risk if he/she goes missing;
- A risk assessment should always take place (if not already completed) after the first incidence of missing and should subsequently be updated by the Social Worker over time.

Each Children's Home (including private residential units) must have written procedures to be followed when a child is missing. These must be compatible with the protocols for responding to missing persons agreed between the Police and the Local Authority in the area where the home is located.

Planning and assessment of young people in care by staff and carers should include a risk assessment of whether the child or young person may run away from their placement. This should be revised and updated regularly.

The child or young person should be told what will happen if they run away, and preventative work should be considered from first placement. They should be given information leaflets and contact details of advocacy services or other services they can access or that can be accessed on their behalf.

5.2 Children missing from residential school

The processes for children in the care of the local authority are applicable to all children and young people who are missing from residential school. This is regardless of whether it is believed the young person is making their way to their family home, as the distances involved may place that child or young person in danger.

5.3 Missing during external activities

Children or young people who go missing while on a holiday or during out-of-placement activities must be reported as missing or absent by the senior member of staff who is responsible at that time for the child or young person, in order to:

- Arrange a search in the area where the child went missing
- Notify the police (who will notify police in the home area if needed);
- Notify the registered manager of the children's home/senior management;
- Notify the Youth Justice Service if the child or young person is on remand;
- Notify the Emergency Duty Team if out of hours.

The registered manager/senior manager of the children's home will be responsible for ensuring the general procedures in relation to a missing child are followed. The registered manager/senior manager of the children's home will decide within 24 hours of the absence whether the other members of the group should return. Ongoing communications between the home and the police covering the area where the absence occurred will be maintained through the period of absence.

6. Other risk factors

Guidance can be located for these areas via the following links:

Child Sexual Exploitation

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/practice-guidance/>

Harbourers / Trafficking

<http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/child-protection-procedures.html>

National Referral Mechanism Guidance and Forms

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

Forced Marriage and Honor Based Violence

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/practice-guidance/Channel – Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118194/channel-guidance.pdf

7. Information sharing

Collecting the right data at a local level is essential to driving improvements in services. Early and effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for the identification of patterns of behaviour and to identify risks in the area, such as exploitation, gangs or crime-related activity that might not previously have been apparent. This may be used to identify areas of concern for an individual child, or to identify ‘hotspots’ of activity in the local area. It will also help identify trends, for example, whether children are going missing from a particular children’s home or other patterns across the locality.

Data about children and young people who go missing from home or care are reported to the NYSCP Practice Development Subgroup on a six monthly basis and an annual report presented at the full NYSCP Partnership meeting annually. In addition reports are tabled at the Looked after children members meeting (Corporate Parenting Board) which includes the Lead Member for Children’s Services.

Issues to be addressed in strategic monitoring reports will include:

- Incidence of missing person’s episodes;
- Location – are children more likely to be absent from some placements than others?
- Safeguarding implications;
- Disruption actions where children are located; and
- Professional practice and procedural implications.

Senior managers within the police and Local Authority are accountable for ensuring the processes agreed as part of this protocol are followed.

8. Training

Training is essential for all practitioners who work with children and young people to enable them to use the protocol effectively. Workforce development services for NYCC and North Yorkshire Police will ensure that appropriate and effective training is offered, particularly in regard to risk assessment and managing the return interview. Multi agency briefings and training guidance can be provided by the LSCPs.

North Yorkshire SCP - www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/training-north-yorkshire/training-courses/

Appendix 1: Contact Details

North Yorkshire County Council Customer Resolution Centre	01609 780780
Emergency Duty Team (out of office hours)	01609 780780
North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership	01609 535123
North Yorkshire Police Vulnerabilities Assessment Team	Missingfromhome@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk 101
North Yorkshire Police	Emergency 999, Non-Emergency 101
Sexual Assault Referral Centre	01904 669339
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Missing People Helpline	www.missingpeople.org.uk 116000 (24 hours) 116000@missingpeople.org.uk
Rape and Abuse Line	0808 800 0123
NHS Direct Health Advice	111
Victim Support	www.supportingvictims.org 01609643100
Domestic Abuse Support: IDAS	www.idas.org.uk 03000 110 110
Drug and Alcohol Advisory Services (FRANK)	0800 776600

Appendix 2: Definitions:

This Protocol adopts the definitions proposed by Department for Education (2014) statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care⁵

Child: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout this guidance.

Young runaway: a child who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave.

Missing child: a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.

Looked after child: a child who is looked after by a local authority by reason of a care order, or being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Responsible local authority: the local authority which is responsible for a looked after child's care and care planning.

Host local authority: the local authority in which a child in the care of a local authority is placed when placed outside the responsible local authority's boundaries.

Care leaver: an eligible, relevant, or former relevant, child as defined by the Children Act 1989.

Missing from care: a child in the care of the local authority who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g. school) and their whereabouts is not known.

Reporting individual: the person reporting the child / young person as missing.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>



NOTIFICATION OF MISSING YOUNG PERSON

Name	
Date of Birth	
Legal Status	
Social Worker	
LCS Case Number	
Placement Address	
Date and time reported	
Date and time returned	
Circumstances of child going missing	
Particular risks associated with the child being missing This should include a clear analysis of risk to the young person. Risk Factor (contact with person/s posing risk) Be specific about the actual identified risks for this young person, i.e. Risk of being hurt or harmed Risk of being engaged in criminal activities Risk of Mental Health issues Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Factor (contact with person/s posing risk)	
Subsequent actions and outcomes <i>(Be clear about the actions taken to manage the risk and next steps)</i>	
Other Comments	

Form for reporting children who are missing over 24 hours
(or of specific concern) to CFS Assistant Director.

This form to be e-mailed to the CFS Assistant Director & Head of Safeguarding