

MISSING CHILDREN STRATEGY DISCUSSIONS

RISK ASSESSMENT

RATIONALE FOR DECISION WHETHER TO HOLD STRATEGY DISCUSSION OR NOT

Children's Social Care should consider convening a Section 47 Strategy Discussion meeting within 24 hours of the child going missing where:

- There have been 3 or more missing episodes in 90 days
- The child/young person has been missing for 24 hours
- The child is under 13 years old

The decision to convene a strategy discussion is not automatic and should be based upon professional judgement and what is proportionate in order to safeguard the young person's welfare. It maybe more appropriate to complete a vulnerability check list and make a referral to MARP, convene an early Child Protection Conference or Looked After Review.

The rational for all decisions must be recorded by the ATM/TM on the case file

In deciding the level of risk, professionals must consider the circumstances of the child and their absence. This will include detailed consideration of:

- The circumstances of the absence;
- The child's care plan;
- The age of the child;
- The maturity of the child;
- Any physical or cognitive disability of the child;
- Any continuing or urgent need for child to have medication or other medical treatment;
- The legal status of the child;
- Previous behaviour and history of the child;
- Danger posed by the child to themselves or others;

- General vulnerability of the child;
- The child's tendency to drug/substance abuse;
- Whether the child is perceived as running to, or running from, someone or something;
- Any circumstances within the placement, say with carers or other residents that may be relevant to the absence;
- The risk of offending;
- The influence of peer groups, families or friends;
- Predatory influences on the child. These may relate to others wanting to use the child for crime, sex or drugs;
- Any known risk of abduction;
- Environmental factors including weather, time of year, community events or tensions;

A Strategy discussion **should** be convened if:-

- there are concerns that the child is or may suffer significant harm whilst away or on their return;
- the missing child is already subject to a child protection plan or section 47 investigation;
- the child is known to Children's Social Care and has gone missing in suspicious circumstances;
- a pregnant woman goes missing and there are concerns for the welfare of the unborn child;
- a family goes missing and there are concerns about the welfare of a child because of the presence in the household of a person who poses a risk to children or is already known or suspected to have harmed the child;
- when a female child's parent state that that they, or a relative, will be taking the child out of the country for a prolonged period and there are other suspicions linked to Female Genital Mutilation
- any child is missing for more than 28 days.

STRATEGY MEETING

In addition to the strategy discussion agenda the chair should ensure the following are covered if the strategy meeting is being held in relation to children and young people who are missing:

- Times and dates of missing episode.
- Previous missing episodes
- Discussion re circumstances prior to going missing (any specific incidence or risk, please include current MH, substance misuse and any risk of exploitation).
- Current actions taken to contact YP (*Calls and text to mobiles, attempts via social media to contact and other forums*)
- Names and address of associates.
- Affiliations to gangs.
- CSE concerns.
- Current info around involvement in crime
- Known hotspots.
- Known routes and methods of travel for missing episodes. (*number plates , train and bus routes.*)
- Social media checks Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat (*Ensure user names are shared; agree who will undertake these checks and where to feed the information to*).
- Consider Media publication.
- Is current photograph up to date and appropriate to share publicly.
- Disruption tactics – (Are any required on perpetrators including KORNS)
- Consider other agency's to be alerted to assist with search:
- CCTV
- British transport police
- Community safety
- Housing providers.
- Youth centres etc.
- Risk Assessment – summary of concerns/presenting risk factors and how they impact on the child. What are we worried about and why.
- Protective factors/Strengths.
- What don't we know?