



Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership

Children missing from home and care protocol 2020



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1 Purpose and scope of protocol

When children run away from home or care, this is a clear signal that something is wrong in their lives. Running away has serious implications for a child's welfare as it puts them at risk of harm in the short term and will affect longer term outcomes. Research also indicates that children who go missing are more vulnerable to extra familial harm such as grooming for sexual and criminal exploitation, and being missing from home, care or education can often be an indicator that exploitation is taking place.

This protocol sets out how agencies in Camden will work together to:

- prevent children from running away
- take action to safeguard the welfare of children who have run away or gone missing
- monitor patterns of running away.

The protocol covers all children (defined as under 18 years old) who run away or who are missing from home or care, including children who are forced out of the family home and children missing from education.

2 Multi-agency working

To ensure a high quality of integrated working and joint responses when children go missing, all agencies will:

- share information in a timely and lawful manner;
- base decisions and actions on missing children risk assessments;
- make appropriate referrals to agencies for services for children, including child protection referrals where the child is at risk of significant harm;
- work jointly to share information and intelligence that enables the development of services for missing children and runaways in Camden;
- appoint a designated officer with lead responsibility for missing children and for the implementation of this protocol;
- ensure staff have the right training and support to carry out their role under this protocol.

3 Information sharing and data analysis

In order to implement this protocol fully and ensure that children who run away or go missing are kept safe, all agencies will share information about running away and missing incidents and the circumstances surrounding them.

Camden collects and collates information about children who go run away or go missing from home, care and education and children from other boroughs who have been placed in Camden.

The information is shared with partners in the Police, Children's Safeguarding and Social Work, Youth Offending Service and Camden Learning. This helps agencies to offer the right support to individual children in order to address their behaviour and allows partner agencies to gain an understanding of patterns and trends of running away and missing episodes and how it links with risks such as child sexual and criminal exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking and gang activity in the borough.

A quarterly report analysing the missing children data is presented to the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership via the Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy Group so that partners are able to scrutinise the quality of the multi-agency response to missing children and ensure that these children are receiving the help they need to safeguard and promote their welfare.

This data will also be provided to front line staff to inform care planning and decision making on individual cases.

Information sharing with other local authorities

- Where it is known that a Camden child has run away to another local authority area, the Police will contact the Police in that area and Camden will notify the local authority.
- Where families go missing, Camden's Children's Quality Assurance Unit will send out notifications to all other local authorities giving details of the family.
- If a child from another area is found in Camden, the council will notify the home local authority.
- Camden will also share any intelligence with regard to child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation with neighbouring boroughs.

4 Agency roles and responsibilities

4.1 Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)

The CSCP will:

- co-ordinate the development of a multi-agency strategy on vulnerable adolescents that includes missing children in Camden;
- provide the policy framework and training to support the implementation of the missing protocol;
- collate and analyse data on running away activity in order to improve responses and service provision;
- scrutinise the multi-agency response to children who run away or go missing.

The vulnerable adolescent strategy group will be the main forum for the development, monitoring and review of the strategy and all agencies will be expected to contribute information as part of the data analysis. The group will report regularly to the Partnership to ensure that all partner agencies are carrying out their role under this protocol and that the protocol is achieving the aim of keeping children safe.

4.2 Police

The police will:

- collect and collate missing persons reports via the National Police Computer;
- carry out investigations of missing children;
- carry out a risk assessment for children who go missing and keep cases under constant review;
- notify other agencies of missing children reports via MERLIN;
- use police powers under the Children Act 1989 as required to safeguard missing children who are located;
- ensure safe and well checks are carried out as soon as possible when the child returns.

Where there are child protection concerns, the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team will be informed and involved in strategy discussions and enquiries as appropriate.

4.3 Children's Safeguarding and Social Work and Early Help Services

The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team will receive all Police Merlins for missing children and will process them under the MASH operational protocol.

Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW) will provide a statutory social work services under the Children Act 1989 where the child is assessed as in need or at risk of significant harm and requiring a child protection response. CSSW will:

- carry out an assessment of children's needs;
- provide a statutory social work service for children based on their assessed needs where the child meets the threshold for services;
- receive all missing children notifications from the police and other agencies;
- where a child is already known to CSSW, ensure preventative planning and appropriate responses to missing incidents are included in the child's plan;
- carry out independent return interviews for children known to CSSW where this is the child's preference;
- keep a record of all children known to CSSW who are reported as missing.

Early Help Services provide an early intervention, preventative service for children who need support to achieve good outcomes but who do not reach the threshold for a statutory social work service. **The First Stop Early Help team** will:

- carry out an early help assessment where the child has complex needs;
- identify a suitable early help service;
- carry out return home interviews for all children aged under 12 years.

4.4 Foster carers, residential workers and housing support workers

Where the child is looked after by Camden, a Camden care leaver or living in Camden's young person's housing pathway, their foster carer, residential worker or housing support worker will:

- contribute to any plans designed to reduce the risk of running away within the care or pathway planning forum;
- respond to missing incidents in line with this protocol;
- carry out joint risk assessments with social workers of children missing from placements;

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- work with the police and CSSW to ensure the child's safe return to placement;
- provide accurate records of incidents to inform data gathering on individual and group patterns of running away.

Residential units should have in place procedures to both prevent LAC going missing and to locate, return and support LAC who have gone missing. Keyworkers in residential units and Pathway accommodation will also follow the Philomena Protocol as set out in section 8.5.

4.5 Emergency Duty Team

Camden's Emergency Team provides a social work service to cover emergency situations arising out of office hours and will:

- respond to notifications from foster carers, residential workers and housing support workers on behalf of CSSW where a looked after child is reported as missing or where there are concerns for the safety of a child who is absent without authorisation;
- provide a response for any runaway who is located by either ensuring their safe return home or to their placement or where necessary arranging for emergency overnight accommodation;
- pass on all relevant information to CSSW or other services for further action.

4.6 Schools and colleges

Schools and colleges will:

- deliver an educational programme aimed at discouraging children from running away;
- where appropriate, refer children on to preventative programmes;
- notify Camden of children who are missing from the school roll under the *Children Missing from Education* policy;
- make referrals for children whom it is thought are at risk of running away;
- notify Camden of any child who is removed from the school roll to be educated at home;
- help children returning from a missing episode to settle back into education.

The *Children Missing from Education* policy is available at:
<https://cscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Children-missing-from-education-Camden-local-guidance.pdf>

4.7 The Children's Society

- The Children's Society will carry out independent return interviews for children aged 12 years and over where this is in keeping with the child's wishes. Parents will be signposted to organisations and resources for support.
- The Children's Society will also provide support for young people whose missing episodes are linked to sexual and criminal exploitation.
- The Children's Society will provide specific training for professionals in the children's workforce including residential units and young people's housing provision. This includes *Child exploitation and extra-familial risk training* that covers all types of risk including CSE and CCE and how missing episodes are linked to these risks.

5 Preventing running away behaviour

It is important that children who are thinking of running away are able to speak to someone about their situation and get support to help them deal with issues that may cause them to run away.

- Professionals who are concerned that a child they work with is at risk of running away should refer the child to the Child and Family Contact Service for assessment for services.
- If the child is aged 16 or 17 and is considering leaving home because of family problems, they should be referred to CSSW for assessment to establish if they are at risk of homelessness.
- Where CSSW is already working with a child who is at risk of running away, social workers and the professional network should work with the child to reduce the risk and plan for any incidents.

Where the child is known to CSSW or the Early Help team risks should be discussed in planning meetings in order to plan what actions to take and support to provide to the child to reduce the risk of them running away and what actions will be taken in the event that they do run away.

6 Assessing and categorising risk

Appendix 1 sets out Camden's categories of risk for children who are missing or absent based on a continuum of risk. The appendix sets out what action needs to be taken for each category of risk and whether children should be reported as missing to the Police.

6.1 Missing

A child will be considered *missing* if they are away from their home or placement and:

- their whereabouts and the circumstances of going missing is unknown; **and**
- their disappearance is out of character; **and**
- there are specific concerns or factors that make the child vulnerable, for example age, disability, mental health difficulties.

Children who are missing under these circumstances are considered to be at high risk and must be reported to the police as missing.

6.2 Concerning absence

A concerning absence is where a child who is known to be vulnerable for a variety of reasons is not at their home or placement as required but their whereabouts is known.

- **Low risk** cases are those cases where the child is known to be or highly likely to be with family or friends and is contactable by phone. These cases ***should not be reported to the police.***
- **Medium risk** cases are those involving CSE or CCE where the case has a Red RAG rating and an active CSE/CCE investigation is ongoing. There is credible evidence that the child will be at serious risk of exploitation whilst away and factors to consider are who they are with, whether they are contactable by phone and how long they have been away. These cases ***should be reported to the police.***

6.3 Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is when a child is not at their home or placement as required but their **whereabouts is known and they are not thought to be at risk**. It is recognised that some children may absent themselves from home or placement without permission but their whereabouts are known by parents

and carers, or they are known to be safe or this is a pattern of repeated behaviour where the young person returns home after a few hours.

These children are classed as *No apparent risk* by the police and ***should not be reported as missing.***

6.4 Absconded

If a child or young person is on bail or the subject of a criminal court order requiring them to remain at a particular address and they run away from that address, this will be a criminal matter and ***the child must be reported as missing to the police.***

6.5 Abducted

If a child is unlawfully removed from the care of anyone who is legally looking after them, whether it is a parent or foster carer, ***the child must be reported as missing to the police immediately.*** This includes any child who is removed from placement by parents or others contrary to the care plan.

Where the child is subject to a care order, emergency protection order or in police protection, social workers may consider seeking legal advice on obtaining a recovery order.

For guidance on children who have been abducted and may leave the UK, please see section 13.

6.6 Missing children risk assessment

A missing children risk assessment must be carried out when a child is missing or absent from home or placement and there are concerns about their safety. The template for the risk assessment is available on the e-CAF system and on MOSAIC and allows parents, carers and professionals to gather information about the individual child and the circumstances of their being away from home or care that can inform decisions on what actions to take.

In particular, the risk assessment can help distinguish between unauthorised absences and concerning absences or genuine missing incidents and identify risk factors that make the child particularly vulnerable while away. The information can also help the police to conduct a search for the child by providing details of contacts and locations.

7 Children missing from home

7.1 Carrying out a risk assessment

Where a child goes missing from home, the police will normally carry out the risk assessment at the time of the report being made. However, social workers or other professionals who are already working with the family should help parents to carry out the assessment prior to a report being made.

7.2 Reporting a missing child to police

When a child goes missing from home, there is an expectation that their parents will report this to the police, and any failure to do so will be considered a safeguarding issue.

If a professional becomes aware that a parent has not reported a child as missing, they should refer the child to the MASH team immediately, particularly if there were concerns about the child's welfare prior to them going missing or if they have a history of running away.

If **a social worker who is working with a child in need** becomes aware that a child has not been reported as missing, they should discuss the matter with their manager and an Independent Reviewing Officer. Parents should be encouraged to file a missing report or alternatively, it may be decided that CSSW will report the child as missing.

7.3 Referring children and families for services

All missing children who are not already known to CSSW should be referred to the MASH team using a CAF referral. The MASH will make a decision within 24 hours on what action to take and what services are needed to support the child on their return based on the level of risk or need. This may be an early help service or referral to CSSW for a social work service depending on the level of risk and the child's needs.

7.4 Child protection response

CSSW will convene a strategy meeting within 3 days of the child going missing where:

- 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 CSSW and has gone missing in suspicious circumstances;
- a pregnant women 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.

8 Children missing from care

8.1 Carrying out a risk assessment

Foster carers, residential workers and housing support workers should liaise with the allocated social worker to carry out the missing children risk assessment jointly to **establish the category of absence** and make a decision on whether to report the child as missing to the police. Out of hours, carers and workers can contact the EDT for advice and assistance on completing the risk assessment.

8.2 Response to unauthorised absence

A child will be absent without authorisation if the carer or worker knows where the child is. In these cases the child **should not be reported as missing to the police**, but the carer or worker should make all attempts to contact the child and persuade them to return to the placement.

All unauthorised absences must be notified to the child's allocated social worker at the earliest opportunity but there is **no need to notify the EDT**. Although no action should be taken on unauthorised absences, they do need to be monitored; social workers and carers/keyworkers should update the risk assessment on a regular basis or when new information becomes known.

8.3 Response to concerning absences

Low risk cases, where the child's whereabouts are known, the child is contactable and is with family or friends and likely to be safe, should not be reported to the police. The carer or worker should make all attempts to contact the child and persuade them to return to the placement and repeat the risk assessment at intervals to monitor the situation and gather up to date information in case the level of risk increases.

Medium risk cases, where the child's whereabouts are known but there is an ongoing CSE or CCE investigation on a case and there is credible evidence that the child will be exploited whilst away should be reported to the police.

8.4 Response where the child is missing

If a child goes missing from the placement, the foster carer or worker should make all reasonable efforts to locate them in the first instance but this must not delay any action to report the matter. This should include searching the local area, contacting friends and birth family members and trying to contact the child directly.

If the child cannot be located within a reasonable timescale for the child's age, they should be reported as missing to the police immediately. The child's allocated social worker (or EDT out of hours) should be notified. Residential homes should also notify their registration authority as appropriate.

8.5 Response under the Philomena protocol

The following refers to the procedures to be followed by residential and housing pathway staff and sets out the initial actions that should be taken prior to a young person being reported as missing to the police under the Philomena Protocol.

Where a young person is absent without authorisation from a residential home or pathways accommodation, and the risk assessment establishes that they are missing or their absence is a medium risk concerning absence with a red or amber CSE/CCE rag rating and credible evidence that they are likely to be exploited whilst away, workers should follow the procedures set out in the Joint Responsibility Agreement with the Metropolitan Police (available on the CSCP website), and specifically those listed as the *Expected actions prior to police involvement*.

8.6 Recording missing and absent incidents

Foster carers and workers must keep accurate records of:

- the date and time of the child going missing or absenting themselves;
- any relevant circumstances or incidents;
- the category of absence;
- action taken to locate or contact the child;
- whether the police were informed and if not, reasons for this;
- details of any conversations and agreed actions taken with social workers and police.

Completed risk assessments should be kept on the child's file and a copy given to the police and the allocated social worker.

8.6 Children placed out of borough

Children who are placed at a distance from their home borough are more likely to be at risk of extra-familial harm such as sexual and criminal exploitation and substance misuse than looked after children who are placed closer to home. It is important that their vulnerability is recognised when planning for placements and that social workers remain vigilant to the increased risks during placement.

CSSW staff involved in commissioning and choosing placements for looked after children who are being placed out of the borough should contact receiving local authorities to get information about the local area and whether there will be any increased risks to the child, especially where the child has a history of running away.

Although carers and workers in the host authority will follow their own local procedures ***this protocol applies to all children who are looked after by Camden regardless of where they are placed.*** A copy of the protocol must be provided to all out of borough placement providers and social workers should stress the importance of carers and residential workers notifying social workers of all unauthorised absences and missing episodes.

9 Reporting the child as missing

The following information needs to be provided to the police when a child is being reported as missing:

- details about the child's family or care placement, including names of parents/carers, address and any contact details for the child, and the child's legal status;
- a physical description of the child;
- information on friends and family and/or other possible locations;
- details of the circumstances of the child going missing, including the time and whom they were last seen with;
- a recent photograph of the child;
- details of any mobile phone numbers/email addresses or social media sites;
- bank details;
- details of school/educational establishment attended;
- a copy of any risk assessment that has been undertaken.

Keyworkers in residential units and pathways accommodation who are reporting a young person missing under the Philomena Protocol should provide information in the “grab pack” format.

10 Locating a missing child

Although the police have lead responsibility for locating a missing child, parents, carers and professionals may all have vital information that could help and it is important that agencies working with the child share any information they have.

Runaways may continue to attend school or clubs and activities or try to contact friends whilst missing; if a school or any youth service has any knowledge of a missing child attending, being seen or contacting others, this should be shared with the police and the rest of the professional network.

For looked after children, enquiries should be made with the child’s immediate and extended family or any other network of friends. It should be made clear to them that it is an expectation that they persuade the child to return to their placement in the event that they make contact.

Parents may wish to consider checking the child’s email or social networking accounts to see if they are still being accessed. If the child is looked after, this will be carried out by Missing and CSE co-ordinator in line with CSSW’s social media policy.

11 Informing the media

In missing children cases where there is a high level of risk, the police may consider using media coverage as a means of enhancing the investigation. This will be discussed with parents and social workers in advance.

- Where a child lives at home, any decision to inform the media will be taken by the child’s parents in consultation with the police.
- Where a child is accommodated by CSSW, this decision will be taken by the Director of CSSW, following consultation with the allocated social worker and their manager, the police and the child’s parents.
- If the child is on a care order to Camden, the Director will make the decision to inform the media but will inform parents in advance where this is in the child’s best interests.

12 Dealing with the child's return

12.1 Safe and well check

Once a child is found or returns home, the police will conduct a safe and well check to establish what has happened to the child whilst missing and check their general welfare. The safe and well check will also look at whether the child:

- has suffered any harm
- has been the victim of any offence
- has committed any offence.

If the child is returning home, the police should also establish whether there are any child protection issues and if it is safe for the child to return there. As a result of these checks, the police will decide what further action to take in terms of referring the child on for services. Safe and well checks will be carried out within 24 hours of the police being notified of the child's return.

The method used to carry out the safe and well check will be decided based on the level of perceived risk to the child and may be via a face to face interview with the child or a telephone call to the child or a relevant professional. In general:

- Where the case is assessed as high risk by the police a safe and well check will be carried out in person within 1 hour of notification of return or location by police.
- In cases concerning looked after children or individuals under the care of a mental health facility, the contact will be with the care manager, social worker or responsible clinician. A decision to carry out a safe and well check by telephone call only will only be taken following consultation with the relevant professional.

12.2 Return interview

All missing children and children whose unauthorised absence caused concern will be offered an independent return interview within 72 hours of their return. A return interview will not be offered to a young person whose missing episode is classed as an unauthorised absence unless they have 3 or more unauthorised absences in a period of one month.

- The Children's Society worker based in the MASH team should be notified by the Police or allocated social worker of any child who meets the criteria for a return interview.
- For young people aged 12 years and above, (or 11 if attending secondary school) the interview will be carried out by the Children's Society worker, who will contact the child with an offer of an interview. If this is refused, the worker will try to identify another member of the child's professional network who may be able to carry out the interview.
- Where the child is known to CSSW, this may be the social worker if it is felt that there is no conflict and that the social worker is suitably independent to carry out the interview.
- For children under the age of 12, their allocated social worker will carry out the interview; if the child is not known to CSSW the interview will be carried out by a Family Worker based in the Early Help team.

The purpose of the interview is to give the child an opportunity to speak to someone about why they run away and explore what help and support they need address their reasons for running away and provide them with information on how to stay safe.

It is important that the interview is carried out by someone independent of the child's care but also that the child has a good relationship with and feels comfortable talking to the interviewer about their experiences.

Where a young person refuses to engage in a return home interview, the social worker should obtain relevant information from the parents or carers. Information from the return home interview should be used to inform case planning.

12.3 Further work on return

If the missing children risk assessment shows that the child has unmet needs, the MASH manager will ensure that the child is referred on for a suitable social care service which may be an Early Help Service or a CSSW statutory social work service depending on their level of need.

Where the child has run away from a care placement, their social worker and their Independent Reviewing Officer will discuss whether they should remain in their current placement and may convene a LAC review to discuss what support is needed to avoid further missing episodes.

When a child is returning to school following a missing episode, the school should consider holding a reintegration meeting with parents, carers and social workers so that the return to school can be properly planned. The reintegration meeting should look at what the school can do to help the child catch up on missed work and any support that can be offered to reduce the risk of the child running away again.

13 Children missing in specific circumstances

13.1 Children at risk of extra familial harm and exploitation

Extra-familial harm describes the risk to children and young people arising within the community rather than within the home, for example risks arising from their peer group or neighbourhood. Forms of exploitation include child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, for example involvement in county lines.

Frequent unauthorised absences, returning home or to placements late and going missing on a frequent basis can make children more vulnerable to grooming and exploitation by others and being missing from home, placement and school are all possible indicators of that the child is being exploited. Patterns and frequency of absence or running away are likely to rise as the child becomes more enmeshed in the exploitation.

Professionals should refer to the CSCP protocol “Children abused through sexual exploitation” for information on indicators to be aware of and what action to take where there are strong suspicions of sexual exploitation.

<http://www.CSCP->

Child criminal exploitation and county lines are examples of exploitation linked to modern slavery where children are forced into criminal activity.

Professionals should refer to the CSCP “Modern slavery and trafficked children” protocol for further information and advice on what action to take where trafficking is suspected:

<http://www.CSCP->

13.2 Children missing on external activities

If a child goes missing during external activities, the group leader should carry out the following procedures. Schools should also refer to Camden’s schools emergency planning procedures.

- Carry out a search of the area to try to locate the child but do not delay reporting the child as missing.

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- Report the child as missing to the local police; this information will be passed on to the Missing Person's Unit where the child lives and the incident will be jointly investigated.
- For children living at home, notify their parents.
- For looked after children, notify their foster carer or residential key worker, and their allocated social worker; out of hours, this notification should be given to Camden's EDT.
- Notify the relevant service manager and decide on what action should be taken, for example arranging a further search or returning home.

13.3 Children from other boroughs

A runaway from another borough may come to the attention of Camden police or approach CSSW for help. In these circumstances, the Contact Service will contact the child's home authority and negotiate with them to arrange their safe return. Out of hours, this will be carried out by the EDT.

If the child is in immediate danger or at risk of serious significant harm, the police and CSSW will use statutory powers of intervention under the Children Act 1989 to ensure the child's immediate safety and welfare before referring the matter back to the home authority.

13.4 Abduction, forced marriage, FGM and removal from the UK

If it is suspected that a child has been or may be abducted and removed from the UK, normally due to disputes over residency or custody, parents should be advised to contact the Child Abduction Unit in the Official Solicitors Office for details on what action can be taken.

[International Child Abduction and Contact Unit \(ICACU\) - Offices of Court Funds, Official Solicitor and Public Trustee](#)

Forced marriage involves the obtaining of consent to marry by duress, threats and violence. If there are concerns that a young woman has gone missing because of a forced marriage, social workers and professionals should refer to the government guidance "The Right to Choose" for details of what action to take.

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/3849543/forced-marriage-right-to-choose>

If it is feared that the child may be removed from the UK for the purposes of forced marriage, professionals should contact the Forced Marriage Unit based in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. [Victims of forced marriage](#)

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If there are concerns that a young girl may be removed from the UK for the purposes of female genital mutilation (FGM) professionals should follow the guidance set out in the London Safeguarding Children Board guidance and contact the police and CSSW as a matter of urgency.

[London Safeguarding Children Board](#)

13.5 Missing from education

Where a child fails to attend school or goes missing from the school roll the school must notify the Monitoring and Inclusion Officer who will take action to ensure that the child is safe and well and to make arrangements for them to return to full time education.

If a child is removed from a school to be educated at home, schools must notify the Pupil Attendance Service so that the Home Education Officer can contact the family to ensure the home education offered is of a good enough standard and to ensure the child's safety and welfare.

Full details of actions that will be taken can be found in the "Children missing from education" policy available at: [Schools and Nurseries Safeguarding Policies | Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

14 Resources and support

All children who go missing will be offered a return home interview and referred on to suitable services depending on their level of need. Parents and carers will also be signposted to suitable support and resources. The following resources are available in Camden:

Missing people

www.missingpeople.org.uk

116 000

Works with young runaways, missing people and their families. Advice and information for professionals working with young people who run away or go missing.

Alone in London

www.aloneinlondon.org.uk

020 7278 4224

Services to engage and support young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

New Horizons Youth Centre

www.nhyouthcentre.org.uk

68 Chalton Street

NW1 1JR

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0207 388 5570

Help, advice and support for young people aged 16-21 in the Kings Cross area who have housing issues.

Muslim Youth Helpline

www.myh.org.uk

0808 808 2008

18 Rosemont Road

NW3 6NE

Childline

www.childline.org.uk

0800 1111

Reunite

www.reunite.org.uk

01162 556234

Advice and help for parents whose children have been removed from the UK.

Railway Children

www.railwaychildren.org.uk

01270 757 596

Advice, support and outreach work for young people on the streets and advice for adults working with them.

The Children's Society

www.childrenssociety.org.uk

0300 303 7000

A dedicated worker who offers independent return home interviews on a voluntary basis and provides training for professionals to raise awareness of the issues around going missing.

15 Review of protocol

This protocol will be reviewed on a 12 monthly basis by members of the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership Staying Safe sub-group.

Appendix 1: Missing children continuum of risk matrix (based on police definitions)

Police Definition	Category of absence	Definition	Action
No apparent risk	Unauthorised absence	The child is not at home or placement as required but their whereabouts is known and there is no apparent risk of harm.	Parent/carer/keyworker to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to contact child to persuade them to return • repeat the missing children risk assessment. • notify the CSSW social worker • Do NOT report to police
Missing- Low risk (risk of harm is possible but minimal)	Concerning absence- Low	Low risk cases are those cases where the child is not at home or placement as required, but despite vulnerability /risk of exploitation, is known to be or highly likely to be with family or friends and is contactable by phone.	Parent/carer/keyworker to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to contact child to persuade them to return • repeat the missing children risk assessment • notify the CSSW social worker • Do NOT report to police <p>If at any time contact with the child is lost and their whereabouts becomes unknown, the child will be considered at medium risk (see below)</p>
Missing- Medium risk (risk of harm is likely but not serious)	Concerning absence- Medium (Red or Amber RAG rated CCE and CSE)	Medium risk cases are CSE and CCE cases where the case has a Red or Amber RAG rating and an active CSE/CCE investigation is ongoing and there is credible evidence that the child will be exploited, the child is suspected of being with exploiters, is not with family and is not contactable by phone-	Child to be reported as missing to the police. Parent/carer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete missing children risk assessment to gather information for the police • notify the CSSW social worker

Camden missing children protocol

			<p>For young people in residential homes or Pathway accommodation, keyworker to follow the Philomena protocol:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the information in the grab pack is completed and up to date; • complete all relevant enquiries to trace the young person • notify the police via the Police website MPS Online
<p>Missing- High risk (Risk of serious harm very likely)</p>	<p>Missing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's whereabouts and the circumstances of going missing is unknown; and • their disappearance is out of character; and • there are specific concerns or factors that make the child vulnerable, for example age, disability, mental health difficulties. 	<p>Child to be reported as missing to the police.</p> <p>Parent/carer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete missing children risk assessment to gather information for the police • notify the CSSW social worker <p>For young people in residential homes or Pathway accommodation, keyworker to follow the Philomena protocol:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the information in the grab pack is completed and up to date; • complete all relevant enquiries to trace the young person • notify the police via the Police website MPS Online

Appendix 2 Lead officers and contacts

Name	Designation	Agency
Michelle O'Regan	Head of Service CIN	Children's Safeguarding and Social Work
Julia Simmonds/Alex Musgrove	LAC team managers	Children's Safeguarding and Social Work
DS Joel Edwards Check	DS Missing Persons Unit	Camden and Islington Police
Jackie Dyer	Designated safeguarding nurse	Camden Clinical Commissioning Group
Bryony Smith	Missing and CSE co-ordinator	Children's Safeguarding and Social Work

MASH team: 5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG
Tel: 020 7974 3317/4094/6600
Fax: 020 7974 3310

Head of Quality Assurance 5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG
Tel: 020 7974 3369
Fax: 020 7974 6708

Looked after children team: Crowndale Centre
218 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BD
Tel: 020 7974 1108/1472
Fax: 020 7974 4490

Fostering team: Crowndale Centre
218 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BD
Tel: 020 7974 1238
Fax: 020 7974 6799

Care leavers team: Vadnie Bish House
33-43 Caversham Road
London NW5 2DR
Tel: 020 7974 1239/3379
Fax: 020 7974 3170

Pupil Attendance Service 5 Pancras Square
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