

MISSING PRACTICE GUIDANCE: The following practice guidance is for Social Work teams to follow when any child under 18 years of age or relevant young person goes missing:

- 1. Child/YP goes missing:** When an Islington child is reported missing to the police, a Merlin/PAC report is sent to CSCT.
 - For any missing children who are not allocated to the CIN, CLA, DCT or Independent Futures teams, CSCT will start and complete the LCS missing episode record. If a non-allocated child goes missing for more than 5 days, the case will be assigned to a CIN team who will follow the missing safeguarding process.
 - For allocated cases to CIN, CLA, DCT or Independent Futures the Missing Project Officer will start the LCS missing episode record and upload the merlin to case file documents. The episode will then be re-assigned to the allocated Social Worker
 - For allocated/non-allocated cases where the Social Worker finds out the child is missing before the Police (i.e. via a family member or friend etc...) it is the Social Workers responsibility to report the child missing to Police (calling 101) and to start the LCS missing episode record themselves.

- 2. Missing Safeguarding Process:** When a missing episode record is created on LCS the Missing episode task will appear in the allocated Social Worker's tray. In addition, an alert will be sent to the allocated Deputy Team Manager and Team Manager to ensure that the following safeguarding process is completed:

For children that go missing from care it is the responsibility of the social work team to coordinate the immediate response and agreed actions with the police, parents and multi-professional network. This must be clearly recorded on case notes within the open LCS missing episode record.

- A. Risk Assessment:** All cases should have an up to date risk assessment on file. It is important that risk assessments are up-to-date and clearly recorded for children and young people that go missing. You can access the generic risk assessment form in the forms tab of the missing episode or the main case file.

- B. Missing Meeting:** In the following situations you are required to hold a meeting where the missing risks and safeguarding response is discussed and agreed:

- For children who go missing from home you are required to hold a missing meeting within 7 days to discuss the risks and agree a missing safety plan. Use the 'Missing Meeting' case note in the open missing episode record to document the meeting.
- For looked after children missing from care you are required to hold a missing meeting within 3 days to discuss the risks and agree a missing safety plan. Use the 'Missing Meeting' case note in the open missing episode record to document the meeting.

For children that go missing on a regular basis you can hold regular Missing Meetings, as opposed to after each missing episode, to share information and agree the updated missing safety plan. Missing Meeting attendance should be the multi-professional network. The Police should provide input and updates, but it is not mandatory that they attend the meeting.

- Cases that meet threshold for a strategy meeting/discussion: Regardless of the above timescales, if you believe a child is at risk of significant harm then a strategy discussion should take place between management and the police. If the situation is complex or particularly high risk, then you should hold a strategy meeting which must include the Police. Use the standard strategy form on the case file. You should also record that you have held a strategy meeting or discussion on the missing episode record page.

- C. Missing Safety Plan:** For cases where a Missing Meeting has been held it is important that a Missing Safety Plan is recorded; detailing the multi-professional safety guarding response to the child. You can record the Missing Safety Plan in the case notes section of the LCS Missing episode. The Missing Safety Plan should be updated at every Missing Meeting.

- 3. Return to Home Interview:** Every time a child or young person goes missing they should be offered a Return to Home Interview (RHI) by the Targeted Youth Service (TYS). When the Social Worker finalises the LCS Missing episode record, a request will automatically be sent to YYS to complete a RHI. Social Workers should advise the child that they will be receiving both a police de-brief and a RHI. Once YYS have completed the RHI record on LCS an alert will be sent to the Social Worker. It is the Social Workers responsibility to check the RHI form and consider how to progress any actions recommended by the Targeted Youth Worker. It is also the Social Workers responsibility to address these issues with the child/young person. If a RHI was not successfully completed (i.e. refused or child not contactable) then the Social Worker must complete their own RHI/de-brief with the child/young person and clearly record this on case notes.

MISSING WORK-FLOW

MFH: a child whose whereabouts cannot be established - where the circumstances are out of character or there are indicators to suggest that the child may be at risk of harm to themselves or others. Any child who fits the above definition, where there are additional concerns regarding CSE, gangs, radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage etc...should be considered 'missing' and not 'absent' (reasonable professional judgement)

MFC: includes children that have stayed out longer than allowed (unauthorised absence), run away (missing) and/or been removed from care by an adult (missing). A child where the circumstances are out of character or there are indicators to suggest that the child may be at risk of harm to themselves or others. (Including additional concerns regarding CSE, gangs, radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage etc.) should be considered 'missing' and not 'absent' (reasonable professional judgement)

Child Missing
(Any child under 18 years of relevant child)

Police missing report received (Merlin/PAC) by CSCT

Non-allocated cases: missing episodes for children not open to CIN, CLA, IF or DCT will be started on LCS/EHM by CSCT and a RHI requested

Allocated cases: missing episodes for all cases open to a Social worker in CIN, CLA, IF, DCT will be started on LCS by the Missing Project Officer and re-assigned to the Social Worker

If the allocated Social Worker or CSCT find out the child is missing before Police (i.e. by a parent or friend) the SW must report the child missing to Police by calling 101. In this instance it is the SW's responsibility to start the missing episode on LCS.

Children missing for 5 days will be referred to CIN.

MFC – As soon as the SW team are informed that a child is missing they must agree and record (in the missing episode) immediate actions with Police and parents/carers.

| The SW team is responsible for ensuring the following safeguarding process for every allocated missing child: | | Cases: | Frequency: | Recording: |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Risk Assessment | All open cases should have an up-to-date risk assessment clearly recorded on file. | All open cases | Every 3 months or as risk changes | <u>Generic Risk Assessment form</u> in the Missing episode record |
| Missing Meeting | Cases that require an immediate safeguarding response should be subject to a strategy discussion with police. For complex or high risk cases a strategy meeting with police and the multi-professional network should be held. | Strategy discussion (within 24 hours) or strategy meeting (within 3 days) | Meetings need to be held as – and-when the child goes missing - <u>OR</u> - For children that go missing on a regular basis on-going review meetings can be held. | <u>Strategy form</u> in main case file <u>Missing Meeting case note</u> in the Missing episode record |
| | When threshold is not met for a strategy discussion or strategy meeting then a MFC or MFH meeting should take place. | MFH meeting – within 7 days of the child going missing MFC meeting – within 3 days of the child going missing | | |
| Missing Safety Plan | A Missing Safety Plan, which records how the multi-professional team are responding to the missing episode/s to ensure safeguarding and minimise risk, should be clearly recorded on file. | - Cases where a MFH/MFC or strategy meeting/ discussion have been held - High risk cases - Regular missing children | After every meeting where missing is discussed or on a regular basis | <u>Missing Safety Plan case note</u> in the Missing Episode Record |

Child Returns / is Found

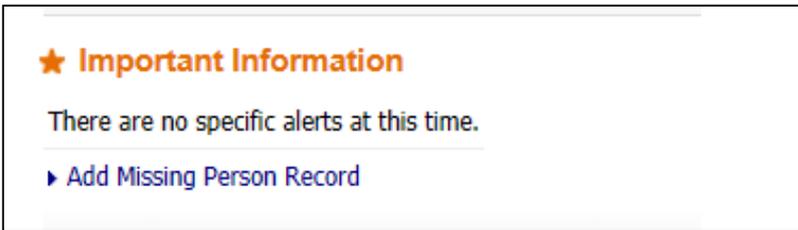
Complex cases should be referred to monthly Missing Panel

The Social Worker informs the professional network and records details of how/when the child was found on the LCS missing episode. Upon ending the missing episode record on LCS an automatic request for a Return to Home Interview (RHI) will be sent to TYS.

Once TYS have completed the RHI record an alert will be sent to the SW – to review the RHI and consider any recommendations.

MISSING – LCS GUIDANCE

- For all allocated cases where the police have told us (via a merlin document) a child is missing, the Missing Project Officer will start the missing episode for you and upload the merlin to case file documents. In this instance, please move directly to step 2 of this guidance.
- For all non-allocated cases where the police have told us (via a merlin document) a child is missing, CSCT will complete the missing episode and request a RHI. Non-allocated cases where the missing episode continues for 5 days will be allocated to a CIN team so that the missing safeguarding process can be followed
- For all non-allocated cases where the police have told us (via a merlin document) a child is missing, but that require an additional response, CSCT will start the missing process – before referring the case to the CIN service. In this instance please move directly to step 2 of this guidance.
- On the occasion that the Social Worker finds out a child is missing before the Police (i.e. via a parent or friend etc...) then the Social Worker must report the child missing to the Police by calling 101. The Social Worker must then start the missing episode using the following steps:
 1. **Adding a Missing Record:** On the left hand side of the case file profile page you will see 'Add Missing Person Record' under the 'Important Information' title



Click on 'Add Missing Person Record' to open the missing record creation form:

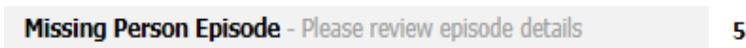
To create a missing person record you will need to complete the 'Missing Status' (1) and 'Episode start date' (2) at a minimum. Once you have done this press 'Create' (3).

2. When a missing record is created, it will trigger the following:

- A Missing marker 'MISP' will appear on the case file profile page (4). The 'MISP' marker will remain until the child has been found.
- A task ('Missing Person Episode') will appear in the allocated Social workers task tray (5)
- An alert will appear in the allocated Deputy Team Manager and Team Managers task tray ('Ensure risk assessment is up-to-date and consider the need for a missing meeting and safety plan') to inform them that a child is missing and to follow the missing process (6)



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3. Completing the Missing episode:

By clicking on the 'MISP' marker (4) or the 'Missing Person Episode' task (5) you will be taken to the Missing episode form front page:

The screenshot shows the 'Missing episode' form front page. On the left, a vertical navigation menu has four items: 'Episode' (highlighted in blue), 'Forms', 'Documents', 'Case Notes', and 'Audit'. Three blue arrows point from the numbers 8, 10, and 9 to these items respectively. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Missing Details' (with fields for Missing Status, Approx. Episode Start Date, Local Authority, and Additional Information), 'Status History' (with a table showing 'Started On' and 'Status'), 'Missing Person Location' (with fields for Location missing from, Location when gone missing, and Additional Information), and 'Actions' (with a list of tasks including 'Update Missing Person Record', 'Delete Episode Task', 'Re-Assign Episode Task', 'Finalise Missing Person Record', and 'Printable View'). A blue arrow points from the number 7 to the 'Update Missing Person Record' task. On the right side, there are sections for 'Risks' (with 'No Risks Recorded' and a link to 'Add a new Risk to Missing Person'), 'Notified' (with 'No other users notified'), and 'Linked Episodes for Siblings' (with 'No other episodes are linked to this one.').

Select 'Update Missing person Record' (7) to amend the basic missing data (1) (2).

For children that go missing from care it is the responsibility of the social work team to coordinate the immediate response and actions with the police, parents and multi-professional network as appropriate. This must be clearly recorded on case notes within the open LCS missing episode record.

4. Recording the Missing process within the LCS Missing episode record:

- **Risk Assessment:** Record your risk assessment by selecting the 'Generic Risk Assessment' form option in the 'forms' tab within the LCS Missing episode record. (8)
- **Missing Meeting:** Record a Missing Meeting within the Missing episode record by selecting 'Missing Case Note' option and then 'Missing Meeting' in 'type of contact' option (9)
- **Missing Safety Plan:** Record you Missing Safety Plan within the Missing episode record by selecting the 'Missing Case Note' option and then 'Missing Safety Plan' in 'type of contact' option (9)

You can save the Police merlin or any relevant documents to that missing episode within the documents tab within the missing episode record (10)

To save any information you add to the missing episode record you need to select 'update' (7)

If you need to hold a strategy discussion or meeting please use the 'Strategy' form found in the main LCS case File (not the missing episode record). You should then record in the Missing episode case notes that a strategy discussion or meeting was held.

- Once the child has been found or returned, you will need to record the found details before finalising the missing episode record. To do this select 'Update Missing Person Record (7). You will then need to add information in the 'Episode End Date' (11), 'End Reason' (12) and any additional information necessary (13)

Press 'Update' once the 'Found Details' have been completed

6. Finalising the Missing Record and Requesting a Return to Home Interview (RHI):

To end the missing record select the 'Finalise Missing Person Record' action on the bottom left of the Missing record (14)

This will open up the 'update missing person' record page where you will need to confirm the found details (15) (16). You will also need to check 'Not Applicable' box under the 'Return Interview' title (17). Once these actions have been completed you should select 'update' at the top left of the screen (18).  This will close the missing episode record and a cross will appear through the 'MISP' marker on the child's profile page.

You do not need to email TYS to request a RHI. A Return to Home Interview (RHI) request will automatically be sent to the Targeted Youth Service (TYS) when you finalise a Missing episode record.

Every child that goes missing will receive a de-brief (or safe and well check) from the Police alongside a RHI from TYS. It is the Social Workers responsibility to talk to the child about missing and returned process so that they understand that both Police and TYS will be contacting them.

Update Cancel - Finalise Missing Person Episode 18

Update Missing Person: [redacted], Missing from ≈ 27-Jul-2016 11:42 to ≈ 28-Jul-2016 11:00

Missing Details

Missing Status Missing From Home
Approx. Episode Start Date ≈ 27-Jul-2016 11:42
Local Authority Islington

Found Details

Episode End Date 28-Jul-2016 11:00 15
 Is this an approximate End Date and time?
End Reason Found by Police 16
Additional Information
Outcomes

Return Interview

Return interview offered? Yes No Not Applicable 17
Additional Information

7. Return to Home Interview (RHI):

Once TYS have completed the LCS Return Home Interview form an alert ('RHI completed please view and read recommendation from TYS') will go to the allocated Social Worker to inform them that a RHI has been completed. It is the Social Workers responsibility to review the RHI form and consider how to progress any actions recommended by the Targeted Youth Worker. It is also the Social Workers responsibility to address these issues with the child/young person. **If a RHI was not successfully completed (i.e. refused or child not contactable) then the Social Worker must complete their own RHI/de-brief with the child/young person and clearly record this on case notes.**