

Running or missing from home, care or education Storyboard

What is running or missing ?

Missing from home or care: 'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another';

Absent from home or care: 'A person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be'.

Children Missing Education: 'Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school or alternative provision.'

Why do children and young people go missing and what are the risks?

Children and young people may go missing to get away **from** something – 'push' factors – or they may go missing to get **to** somewhere they would rather be – 'pull' factors. Some children and young people are vulnerable to being coerced to go missing by someone else. There are particular concerns about the links between children who go missing from home, care and education and the risks of sexual exploitation.

The risks faced by children and young people who go missing from home, care or education are the same whether it is a 'one off' episode or a regular occurrence. However, younger children and those who go missing more often may be more likely to face serious, long term problems.

The immediate risks associated with going missing 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;
- 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.

Why is Running or Missing important to us?

It is vital that the missing episode itself is not seen as a discrete incident but as a symptom of other ongoing issues. Whilst it is important to deal with the missing episode, locate the missing child or young person and ensure they are returned safe and well and engaged in education, work should not stop there. It is vital that work is undertaken to identify the causes of missing incidents to inform interventions to reduce and prevent them reoccurring. This work is likely to be multi-agency in nature and can, on occasions, be demanding.

What is our vision and aim?

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 and / or absent episodes and patterns.

Protect – reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing / absent – 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 / absent 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 – investigate each episode of missing to understand the causes and establish reasons for it. Where criminality is identified, ensure investigation and disruption of those identified.

How do we value the child's voice?

In addition to our vision and aim, capturing the child's voice is an essential part of our work. We aim to ensure that children are listened to, that they are supported in expressing their views and that their views are taken into account and help to shape service delivery and improvements.

We do this by :

- Sending letters to all children added to the VEMT agenda for running missing; to provide opportunities for them to feedback
- Discussing the child's voice feedback at VEMT meetings
- Capturing young peoples views and issues that affect them during return interviews; which feed into intervention planning

How many Missing and Absence from Home, Care or Education Episodes have we had?

The following data set relates to Missing and Absent episodes recorded as having taken place between 01 April 2017 and 31 March 2018:

All Hartlepool children/young people:

Number of absent episodes = 48 by 28 young people

Number of Away from Placement without Authorisation episodes = 28 by 14 young people

Number of missing episodes = 621 by 190 young people

Hartlepool Looked After Children placed out of borough:

Number of Away from Placement without Authorisation episodes = 6 by 6 young people

Number of missing episodes = 90 by 19 young people

Hartlepool Looked After Children placed in Hartlepool:

Number of Away from Placement without Authorisation episodes = 22 by 10 young people

Number of missing episodes = 157 by 31 young people

Missing from Education:

Number of referrals received from schools = 103

Number of children located and referrals closed = 101

Number of referrals still ongoing = 2

What have we done?

VEMT Strategic Group

- Reviewed the Running Missing Protocol

VEMT Strategic Sub-Group

- Revised the Return Interview form
- Delivered running missing training with a focus on improving the quality of the return interview
- Carried out a VEMT Audit which included children who go missing

VEMT Practitioners Group (VPG)

- Moved from discussing the top 10 missing to any child with 3 or more missing episodes in 90 days
- Begun to add children to the main VPG agenda under the category of missing

What do we need to do?

- Carry out a return interview audit to evaluate the impact of work completed and to inform further training, form design and any themes to be explored.
- Ensure that all placements are aware of appropriate reporting procedures.
- Raise awareness with children, young people and their families as to the risks associated with running missing.

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Worried about a child? Call: 01429 284284
Out of hours: 01642 524552

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Call 101 for Police

**If a child is in
Immediate danger
call 999**



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