

## Lancashire County Council Children's Services

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Missing from Home Policy</b>
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### Introduction

The local authority is a key stakeholder in the Pan-Lancashire Joint Protocol (Appendix 1) regarding children and young people who run away or go missing from home or care.

The Joint Protocol sets out the roles and responsibilities of all safeguarding agencies with regards to missing children, and this procedure shows the internal processes designed to ensure the authority meets and exceeds these expectations.

### Information Pathways

The flowchart below shows the basic pathway for information to enter the authority, our required actions to take place, and the management oversight and quality review of this work.

The initial report of the child being missing may come from parents and guardians, educational establishments, residential homes, or any other person with concerns over the whereabouts of a child. Before a child is reported missing, likely locations and known friends and associates should be checked. A guide has been produced by the Children's Society regarding this process – [Runaways – parents and carers guide](#)

### Return Home Interviews (RHI)

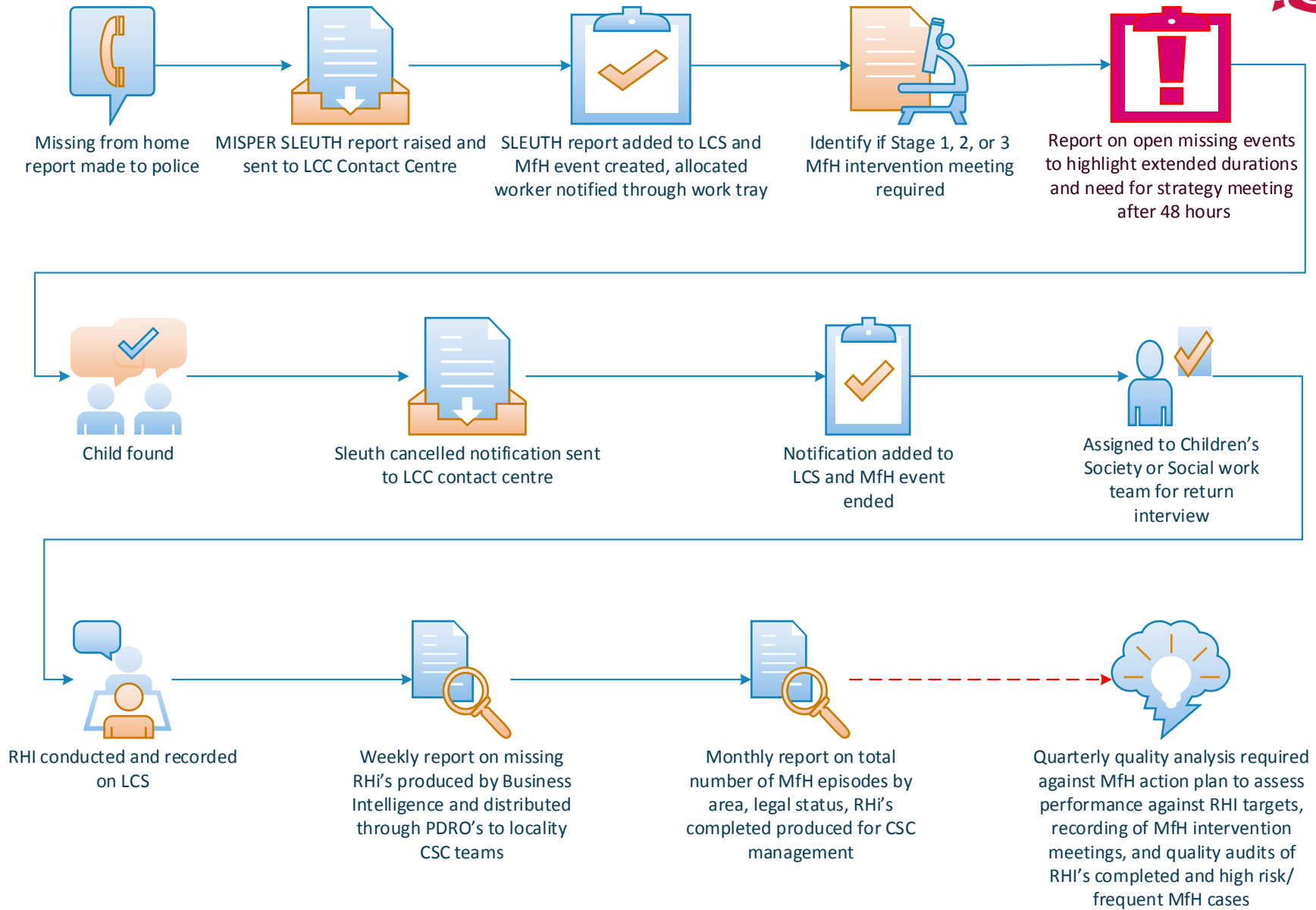
The authority has a duty to ensure all missing children are offered a return home interview within 72 working hours of being found. This is in addition to the police welfare check that should occur once the child is reported as 'found'.

Where the child is not currently open to Children's Social Care, either on an active plan or subject to an ongoing assessment, the RHI request will be commissioned to the Children's Society for completion.

This contract is managed by the *Strategy Lead for Participation (Young People)* for the authority, and the Children's Society team is managed by the *Service Manager - Missing from Home Team Streetsafe*.

Where the child has an active allocated worker within Children's Social Care, a referral for completion of a RHI will be sent via the LCS work trays.

Within the pilot Exploitation Hub area (Central – Preston, South Ribble, Chorley, West Lancashire) all RHI's for open cases will be completed by the Exploitation Hub support worker team. Notifications will be sent from MASH to the team work tray for allocation.



## Discussion and Strategy Meetings

These meetings should be held as a minimum where a child meets the thresholds below, or where concerns are identified that the child is at high risk through going missing, meetings should be held with all relevant professionals invited within 4 days of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, or when the threshold is met for a Stage 3 strategy meeting.

The chairing of these meetings is defined by the LCC [Scheme of Delegation](#).

Stage 1 missing from home meeting	5 missing episodes in 90 days
Stage 2 missing from home meeting	9 missing episodes in 90 days
Stage 3 strategy meeting	continued absence, complex or high risk issues

Where a child is missing for over 48 hours, or where the missing child is under 13 years old and missing for 24 hours, there should be consideration for hosting the next level of meeting, or escalating to a Stage 3 strategy meeting.

## Missing from Home Panel Meetings

Appendix 2 shows the current terms of reference for the Missing from home panel meetings. These are multi-agency forums to allow for discussion and action planning around the highest risk missing children not already captured at MACSE or by the discussion and strategy meetings above.

To facilitate these meeting information is gathered from all partner agencies regarding the children at high risk due to being missing from home (reported, unreported, or absent). Once the nominated children have been identified this is circulated to members for their submissions regarding each case.



## Data Checks and Reports

- Information regarding 'absent' children according to the police classification to be shared weekly by the police *MfH Co-Ordinators* to the LCC *Missing from Home Lead Officer*. Data to be compiled for inclusion within wider vulnerability reporting
- Allocated Social Worker and Manager to ensure all children meeting a threshold for a Stage 1, 2, or 3 missing from home intervention meeting have a meeting within 4 days, or longer with Senior Manager/IRO agreement.
- Weekly report produced by Business Intelligence and circulated via PDR Officers to all locality TM's and PM's regarding outstanding RHI's for their teams.

- Monthly report produced by Business Intelligence and circulated via *PDR Officers* to all locality *TM's* and *PM's* regarding all missing episodes.
- Quarterly analysis of missing from home data compiled by *CSE PEDRO* for the *Missing from Home Lead Officer*

Further information regarding the responsibilities of all agencies for children missing from care can be found it Appendix 3.

The processes that detail how the authority will meet the requirements of this policy are contained in the Missing from Home procedure in Appendix 4.

Appendix 1	<a href="#">Pan-Lancashire Joint Protocol - Children and young people who run away or go missing from home or care</a>
Appendix 2	Terms of reference for Missing from Home panels  Terms of Reference for Missing from Ho
Appendix 3	Statutory Guidance - <a href="#">Missing from Care</a> - <a href="#">Flowchart when a child goes missing from care</a>
Appendix 4	Missing from Home Procedure  Missing from Home procedure.docx