

## Multi-Agency Responses to Children Who Go Missing from Home and Care April 2024

### Introduction

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) conducted learning-themed audits in 2020 and 2024 to evaluate multi-agency responses to children missing from home and care (MFHC). The 2024 audit aimed to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding practices and identify improvements since the 2020 audit.

### Areas of Good Practice

**Recognition:** Strong recognition of missing from home and care at the notification stage, with appropriate responses and good information sharing among agencies.

**Assessment and Planning:** Effective planning and assessment, including detailed Return To Home Interviews (RTHI) and comprehensive safety plans.

**Intervention:** Appropriate interventions based on risk levels, including community responses and engagement with the CAMHS Crisis Team.

**Joint Working:** Good examples of joint working and timely information sharing, particularly in Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Level 2 groups.

**Impact and Outcomes:** Increased parental engagement and effective locality-based interventions.

### Areas for Development

**Recognition:** young people had experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and possible trauma, influencing their vulnerabilities, and were either diagnosed with neurodiversity or seeking a diagnosis. Practitioners are encouraged to explore multiple hypotheses for a child's behaviour, considering both neurodiversity and trauma, rather than focusing on one explanation.

**Assessment and Planning:** Improve exploration of child exploitation risks and ensure information shared in MACE meetings is recorded on all relevant agency systems.

**Joint Working:** Enhance discussions of missing notifications with partner agencies and share more historical information regarding families.

**Impact and Outcomes:** Better evidence of the impact of interventions and support services on reducing missing episodes.

### Context

#### The Risks for Young People Who Go Missing

Children who go missing are at significant risk of harm, including exploitation, abuse, and neglect. The risks faced by children who go missing are the same regardless of how often they have run away from home. The audit highlights the importance of timely and coordinated responses to mitigate these risks and ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable children.

Find out more here: [BeAware](#)

### Resources & Further Information

- [NYSCP BeAware Knowledge Hub](#)
- [Children and Families that go Missing \(Including Unborn Children\)](#)
- [Missing from Home and Care Protocol](#)
- [Children Missing Education](#)
- [Professional Curiosity](#)
- [Supporting the Voice of the Child](#)
- [Learning Themed Multi-Agency Audits](#)
- [Submitting a Referral to the National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\) for a child](#)
- [Centring-the-child-and-working-with-their-network.pdf](#)

[All NYSCP practice guidance can be accessed here.](#)

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### Recommendations

- **Professional Curiosity:** Promote a "both/and" stance when considering children's behaviours, considering both neurodiversity and trauma.
- **Engagement and Voice of the Child:** Develop a toolkit to support practitioners in engaging with children and capturing their voices, including non-verbal cues and cultural complexities.
- **Support for Difficult Conversations:** Ensure practitioners and families are aware of resources for discussing suicide and mental health.
- **Multi-Agency Strategy Meetings:** Update partnership guidance to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities, and proactive information sharing during multi-agency strategy meetings.
- **Contextual Safeguarding:** Consider a Risk Outside the Home pathway to address push/pull factors influencing missing episodes.
- **National Referral Mechanism:** Ensure understanding and consistent use of NRM procedures for each incident.
- **Digital Lives of Young People:** Establish a 'conversation café' to discuss digital safety and share thematic information on apps and devices.
- **CAMHS Referral Process:** Raise awareness of the CAMHS referral process and support families in completing necessary documentation.

Actions and recommendations will be reviewed as part of the NYSCP Subgroup meetings

### Questions for Reflection

1. **How can we improve our recognition and response to children who go missing from home and care?**
2. **Are we being professionally curious when we are looking at the behaviours of young people and their families and exploring multiple hypotheses as to why they may be behaving this way?**
3. **What strategies can we use to better engage with children and capture their voices?**
4. **What strategies and support do we need to help families engage with and access support from partner agencies, e.g. CAMHS?**
5. **How are we using assertive outreach as a proactive approach to engage and support individuals who may be at risk but are difficult to reach? What strategies do we use to actively seek out and maintain contact, providing consistent and tailored support?**

### What to do now

1. Consider the questions for reflection in your team meetings or when being professional curious about a young person or family you are working with.
2. Familiarise yourself with the additional resources and information.
3. Share your learning and the key messages with your colleagues.

Further partnership Audits and Safeguarding Reviews can be accessed [here](#).