



Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership

# **Safeguarding Children & Young People Missing from Home or Care**

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# Working Together

- Sticking to time
- Giving everyone space to participate
- Respecting difference
- Confidentiality
- Sharing

# Learning Outcomes

At the end of this Briefing participants will be able:

- To define the term 'missing' and 'absent' for young people and the risks this poses
- To understand the process for safeguarding children who go missing from home or care
- To understand the role of the Independent Return from Missing Interview Workers
- To identify additional support services for young people returned from missing
- An understanding of the adolescent brain



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# Adolescence Video

# DEFINITIONS

- Missing: any child 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: a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.



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# Reporting Absence

A child is **absent** when they are not at a place where they are expected or required to be but it is known where they are and is not considered to be at risk.

- Carer reports to Children's Services (Allocated Social Worker daytime Emergency Duty Team if out of hours)
- Social Worker conducts a risk assessment with carer
- If the risk increases; report as missing to the Police
- If under 13 report missing; be mindful to utilise your knowledge of the child and their vulnerability
- Known history of CSE and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE); report missing



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# **Why do children and young people go missing from home or care?**

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- Argument with parents
- Tension at home
- Wanted to be with friends
- County Lines
- CSE/CCE
- Abuse
- Mental Health
- Curfew times





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- Do not like the placement
- Because not allowed to stay with friends
- Boredom
- Two young people going off missing together, after their parents found out they are in a relationship – They was of different religions
- Young female who went off to Bangladesh to meet a male she has been speaking to online
- Young male (age 8) left home, went on the bus alone, to go to his cousin's house as he wanted to play the X-Box
- Argument with parents
- Got into trouble at school and was worried to go home
- Went to a party with friends, lied and said she was staying at her friend's but wasn't.

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# ***“Push and Pull”***

“I want to see my friends, I want to go to college and I want to dress how I want. I don’t want to be here all the time, I feel like a prisoner”. (Missing from Home)

“As I’ve said before, I don’t run away. I visit family and friends like normal teenagers. Why don’t they sanction overnight visits to friends and families?” (Missing from Care)

# ***Child or Adolescent?***

"They are dramatic, irrational and scream for seemingly no reason. They have a deep need for both greater independence and tender loving care"

Live Science, 2012.

# THE AVERAGE TEENAGE BRAIN



- The reason the previous description can be used for both toddlers and adolescents is that after infancy the brains most dramatic growth spurt is during adolescence.

Live Science, 2012.

- Teenagers rely on the limbic system (the emotional part of the brain) rather than the more rational prefrontal cortex (the decision making part of the brain). This means teenagers will punch walls, take high risks etc even though when asked they know better.
- The prefrontal cortex (just behind the forehead), in time takes control of the limbic system and regulates high emotions such as rage, fear excitement etc.

Sheryl Feinstein, inside the teenage brain, 2009.

- Consider how past experiences impact on the speed they manage these changes.



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# The Adolescent Brain

[http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_jayne\\_blakemore\\_the\\_mysterious\\_workings\\_of\\_the\\_adolescent\\_brain](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_jayne_blakemore_the_mysterious_workings_of_the_adolescent_brain)

# RISK AND RESILIENCE?

# *Risks*

- Contextual Safeguarding
- CSE child sexual exploitation
- CSA: child sexual abuse
- CCE: child criminal exploitation
- County Lines



# *Risks*

## **Contextual Safeguarding**

Contextual safeguarding recognises the impact of the public/social context on young peoples lives and consequently their safety. Contextual safeguarding seeks to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to young people outside their home, either from adults or other young people. Its an approach that looks at how interventions can change the processes and environments to make them safer for all young people, as opposed to focussing on an individual.

Safer London.



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# *Risks*

## **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

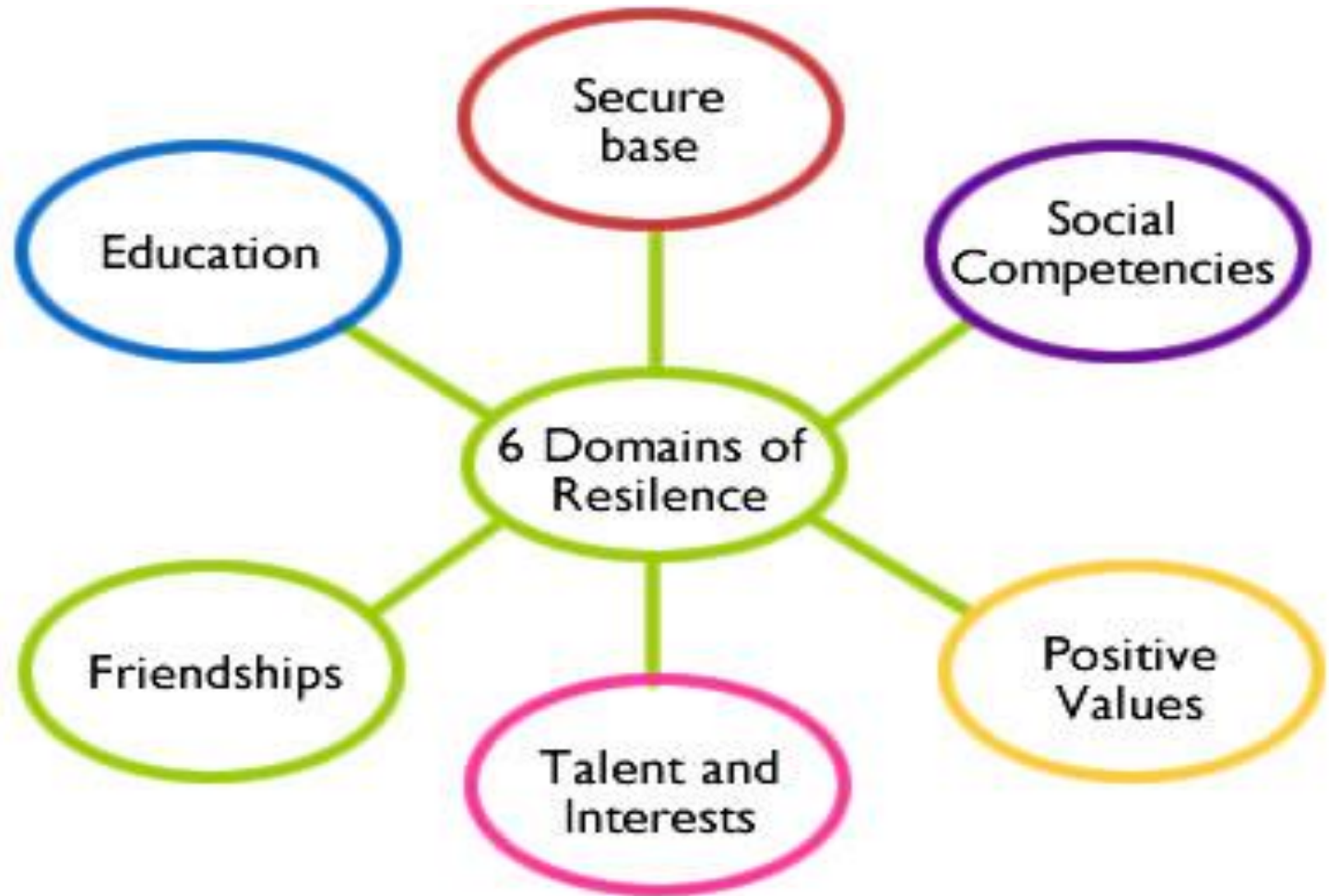
Children who are trafficked, exploited or coerced into committing crimes are victims in need of safeguarding and support. Though perceptions are altering these young people are still often criminalised and perceived as having “made a choice” to take part in illegal activity.

Catch 22.

# Risks

- Becoming a victim of crime,
- Being sexually exploited,
- Becoming involved in substance misuse and/or the sale of drugs and weapons,
- Drifting into other forms of crime and disorder.
- 'Modern slavery'

# Promoting welfare and resilience



*(Brigid Daniel & Sally Wassell – Assessing & Promoting Resilience in Vulnerable Children)*



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“Adults who promote resilience....teach [children] how to communicate with others, solve problems and successfully handle negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours”

*Edith Grotberg (1995)*

# The Teenager is trying to answer:

- Who am I?
- Where do I belong?
- What can I do, or be?
- What do I believe in?

## **Resilience and protective factors**

- Regular attendance at school
- Parental involvement in school
- Understanding / knowing who friends are
- Understanding the grooming process
- Good understanding of risks involved
- Early intervention
- Cultural factors
- Good role models

# Operational missing panel

The Redbridge Missing Children Operational Panel relaunched in April 2019 to provide a forum in which cases of concern could be discussed and progressed through a multi- agency approach.

The aim of this panel is:

- To review all children who have been missing from home or local authority care on more than one occasion within the previous month and those children who have had at least one episode of being missing that has lasted for 48 hours or more.
- To work collaboratively and think creatively about how we can pro-actively reduce the number of children who go missing and the frequency and duration of missing episodes
- To ensure robust safety planning for children who go missing from home and care.
- To hold each other to account, ensuring policy and procedures for missing children are being followed and robust efforts made to keep children safe.
- To identify, discuss and deliver a partnership response to short, medium and long-term themes trends and patterns emerging from missing children data and return home interviews.





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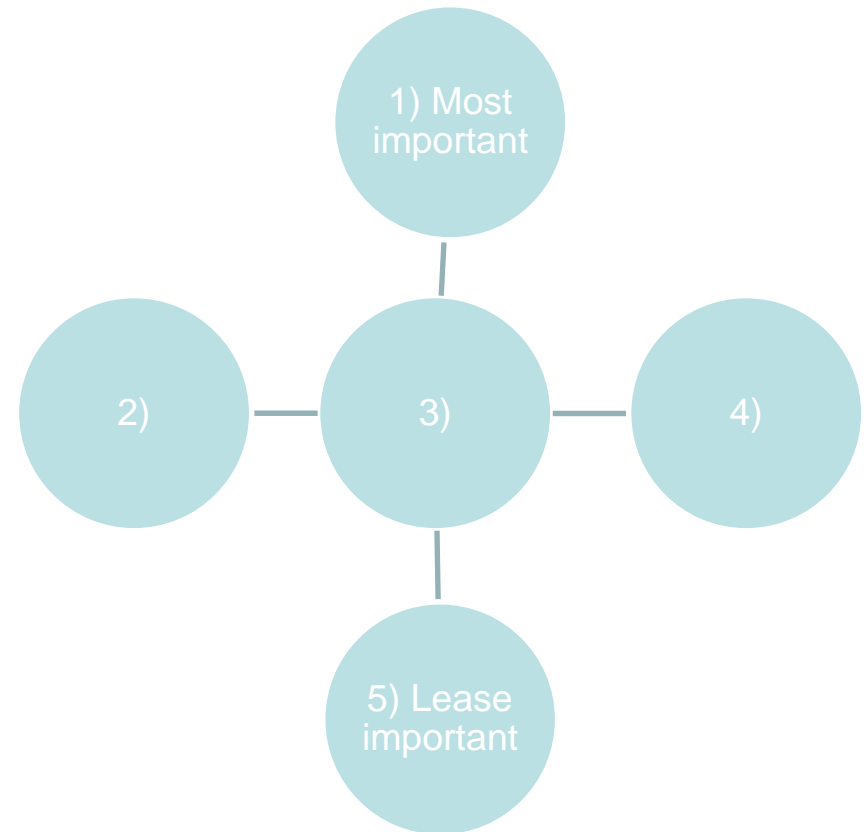
# A problem solving approach

- Enable a full discussion about the nature of the problem.
- Generate a range of possible solutions to the problem (using them as the expert in their own lives).
- Decide on the best solution out of those discussed (better outcomes when they feel involved and in control).
- Put the proposed solution into action for long enough to see how it works.
- Monitor and evaluate the situation and discuss again as necessary.

(based on Lindon, 2003)

# Diamond ranking (O'Kane 2000)

- Diamond ranking is good if teenagers or parents/carers are struggling to prioritise the identified needs. Also helps the worker assess/analyse their understanding of the concerns.
- List the tasks/concerns and support the teenager or family to put them in order of “their” priority.
- Teenagers or families choose the order to deal with issues.
- Provides them power whilst still addressing the identified needs.



# The National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. A range of agencies may be involved in a trafficking case such as the police, the UK Border Agency (UKBA), local authorities and non-governmental organisations such as charities.

The NRM makes it easier for these agencies to co-operate, share information and facilitate access to advice, accommodation and support.

NSPCC: August 2015.

Article 10 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings sets out a two stage process for identifying victims of trafficking. The reasonable grounds test acts as an quick initial filter before the fuller conclusive decision.

# *Stats*

- 7 in 10 young people who have been sexually exploited have also been reported missing.
- At least 1 in 10 children with mental health issues have gone missing.
- 1 in 5 children have stated that they went missing due to conflict, abuse or neglect.

[www.missingpeople.org.uk](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk) (2018).

# Recent Figures

- In 2018/2019, 163 children were recorded on the Children's Social Care Integrated Children's System (ICS) as going missing from home on 266 separate occasions. The statistics in **Table 1** indicate that fewer children went missing from home and that the frequency has decreased from 1.95 episodes per child in 2017/18 to 1.63 per child in 2018/19, a 16.4% reduction.

## Missing from Home

Year	Number of children	Episodes	Episodes during open referral	Frequency per child
2018/19	163	266	154	1.63
2017/18	190	370	195	1.95
2016/17	218	409	233	1.88
2015/16	195	290	No information	1.49
2014/15	158	206	No information	1.30



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# Recent Figures

Month	Cases	Missing Episodes	Missing Episodes During Open Referral	Cases with CSE Concerns
2019/04	21	23	8	
2019/05	27	38	31	2
2019/06	27	33	21	
2019/07	20	22	12	
2019/08	14	14	4	
2019/09	17	19	12	
2019/10	19	24	16	
2019/11	19	26	12	
2019/12	20	23	14	
2020/01	12	13	5	
2020/02	18	22	11	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>2</b>



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# Recent Figures

Relative to the Redbridge population, data suggests that Black, Asian, Mixed Race and 'Other White' children are over-represented among Redbridge missing children, and White British children are under-represented among the cohort.

## **National figures:**

180,000 people are reported missing every year in the UK, one every 90 seconds, according to figures compiled by the charity Missing People. One in 200 children will go missing, with that number standing at one in 500 for adults.  
7 Mar 2019.

Between Redbridge, Havering and LBBD, Redbridge has more missing/absent young people. Redbridge in fact has the biggest proportion!

# Return Interviews

To hear the **voice of the child** and understand:

- why the child went missing
- where the child went
- who the child was with
- what they were doing during the time they were missing
- the risks to the child during the missing episode
- the push/pull factors that led to the missing episode
- assist them to identify alternative strategies



# Independent Return Home Interviews

The assessment of whether a child might run away again should be based on information about:

- their individual circumstances, including family circumstances;
- their motivation for running away;
- their potential destinations and associates;
- their recent pattern of absences;
- the circumstances in which the child was found or returned; and
- their individual characteristics and risk factors such as whether a child has learning difficulties, mental health issues, depression and other vulnerabilities.

# What next after a Return Interview?

**The return to home interview allows us to get information about what is happening with the Young Person. It is very important that the worker shares all information and gets support for the Young Person.**

- Worker will feedback outcomes of interview to MASH, they can progress to CPAT for a C&F assessment
- Worker can make a referral to Early Intervention Panel – if case is not open
- Young Person may need a Mentor or counselling at school – Worker will E-mail Safeguarding Lead at their school to ask for this support
- Coping Through Football
- Box Up Crime
- Fusion Referral
- Worker can request that the allocated Social Worker to do a FIT referral if needed – Youth Services/CSE/Gangs

# Questions

1. For all of us there are good things about where we live and some difficult things. Can you tell me something that's good about being back and something difficult about being back?
2. Can you tell me something about the places you visited when you were away? Did you stay with anyone when you were away?
3. Can you talk me through a typical day when you were away? Were any days different? If yes how were they different?
4. What was good about running away and staying with...? What was the most difficult thing about running away?

# Questions

5. What was the first thing you did/ your carers did when you got home?
6. If one thing could change in your life to make things better right now what would it be?
7. Parents/carers view of the incident. Discussions with parents or carers should occur separately.
8. If a similar situation occurred in the future, how would you prefer to handle the situation?
9. Is there any support you feel you need to help with managing the young person's behaviour (e.g. training, advice)

# Questions

8. If in the future you feel that you are not able to cope with staying at home anymore what would you like us to do before you decide to run away? (Reflect on most recent episode)

Talk about safe running.

9. Would you like a number to call/text at any time when you're missing or needing to talk?

10. If there was a group of young people who feel like you would you want to be in touch with them?

11. What do you want now?

# What support is available after a Return Interview

- CSE services – Tiger Light
- Domestic Violence/CSE – VAWG
- Gangs Support – St Giles / Box Up Crime
- Youth Services – Mentors and Positive Activities
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour – TAITH
- 1:1 Missing Bespoke Work

Referral to the Early Intervention Panel to consider e.g. Youth Services, Families Together, Parenting programme, Box Up Crime.

- <https://find.redbridge.gov.uk/kb5/redbridge/fsd/home.page>

# Voice of the Child

- Listening to a child is an important factor in protecting and minimising the chances of a child running away.
- The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) suggests that return interviews are 'relevant to all missing persons' regardless of age'.
- The Children's Rights Director (2012) reported that "*one of the major influences of them running away is having a sense that they are not being listened to and taken seriously*"



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# **CASE STUDIES**

## Missing or Absent?



# Case Study 1

Contrary to house rules a child leaves the home and states that they are going to be staying the night with their older sister at an address that is known to you. There are no known risks at the sister's address.

You speak to the sister and she confirms that the child is safe and well at her address and in her care.

# Case Study 2

A child fails to return home at the agreed time, your enquiries have failed to establish the child's whereabouts and you cannot contact the child directly

# Case study 3

A child fails to return home at the agreed time, You contact the child by telephone and they state that they are staying with friends and give you the address and confirm they will not be home this evening. You know that the child is at risk of harm if they stay at that address.

# Case Study 4

A child asks you for an extension to their curfew time as they want to visit a friend at the weekend. You know of the friend and the address and there are no known risks. You are happy for this to happen but the allocated social worker refuses to sanction the extension. On the night of the visit the child fails to return at the curfew time. You contact the child and they confirm that they are with the friend and will be home in an hour.

# Case study 5

A young girl leaves the home at 8pm, this is odd as this girl is always in the house during the evening, you ask her where she is going, she says to see a friend. You remind her of the 10pm curfew time. At 9pm you receive a call from the girl stating she may be 5 or 10 minutes late returning home, she will not say where she is or who she is with. You hear male voices in the background telling her to end the call.



# The Children's Society

“challenge negative attitudes about young runaways among professionals to make sure that they are always seen as children who need help and not as children who are causing trouble”

# Legislation and Guidance

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children and related statutory guidance \(2015\)](#) & 2018
- Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care (DFE 2014) & Roles and responsibilities when a child goes missing from care: organisational flowchart:

[Safeguarding Children who go missing from care](#)

Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (2009); [www.equation.org.uk](http://www.equation.org.uk)

# Reflections.

## Q&A



# Training Transfer

Three actions to support learning in your team / setting:

- Feedback to manager, discuss at team meetings
- Distribute: *Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care (DFE 2014) & Roles and responsibilities when a child goes missing from care: organisational flowchart:*

[Safeguarding Children who go missing from care](#)

- Distribute: referral flowchart (See LSCB website for PowerPoint)

# Last thoughts.

“Young people need stability and continuity in their lives to give them the personal confidence and platform from which to experiment, make mistakes, take risks and rise to the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood” (Stein, 2004).

Please complete online to obtain  
your certificate.

# Evaluation



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[www.redbridgescp.org.uk](http://www.redbridgescp.org.uk)

*Thank you*

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