

Appendix 5

Children Missing from Care And Home: Return Questionnaire

Introduction

Children who go missing may sometimes be running from something which places them at risk and may run into or to, situations which also place them at risk.

Children may be to talk about these issues, however professionals need to find out why the child goes missing in order to safeguard them.

Who Interviews the Child

Professionals must liaise to ensure that children are not interviewed more than is absolutely necessary about the same thing. The Police will interview all children when they return. In addition all children should be offered the opportunity to talk to an independent person whom they trust.

According to the *Young Runaways Report (SEU, 2002)* the professionals most closely involved with the child are often frustrated by the child's behaviour which means that children are likely to receive a negative response when they return. This response can stop the child talking about their experience and exacerbate the situation rather than resolve it for the child.

The independent person could be a social worker other than the child's social worker, if they have one, or a teacher, school nurse, Connexions, Youth or Youth Offending Team Worker, a voluntary sector practitioner or a police officer whom the child knows and trusts. The child should be asked who they wish to speak to.

Areas to be Covered

The fullness of the interview will depend on the circumstances and the degree of risk to the child.

1. Is the child happy where they are living, or are they worried/upset about anything?
2. Where was the child and who were they with?
3. What did the child do whilst they were missing?
4. Did the child feel safe and looked after?

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5. What happened when the child got home?
6. What does the child want to have happen now – short term/long term?
7. Parents/carers view of the incident?
8. The interviewer should provide the child with information about how they can access further or ongoing support services. Record the information here:

Interviewer Name	Designation	Date

NB: The interviewer must ensure that other professionals who are involved with the child/ young person are copied into this information.

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