



What to do when
a child goes missing

A Guide for Professionals

Calderdale
Council

Which children are more likely to run away?

- Children not living with their families
- Children who are absent from school
- Those who have problems with drugs, alcohol or have been involved with the Police
- Children who consider themselves disabled or with learning difficulties
- Children living in separated families
- Children Influenced by Peers
- Children in distress or crisis



When a child runs away they are at risk of serious harm

Going missing can be an early indicator of child exploitation (CSE/ CCE). This guide gives some simple advice on what steps you need to take in order to respond to young people who run away from home or care and how to manage the risks involved.



Why do children run away from home?

- **Problems at home** - these can range from arguments with parents to long term abuse. Some young people in care run away to be closer to friends or family.
- **Problems at school** - for example being bullied.
- **Problems elsewhere** - young people may run away to adults who want to exploit them for criminal or sexual activity.
- **Young people may be influenced by Peers**

A black and white photograph of a door with a 'POLICE' tape across it. The tape is white with the word 'POLICE' in bold black letters on the left side, and a black diagonal stripe on the right side. The background is a blurred door with a handle and a lock.

POLICE

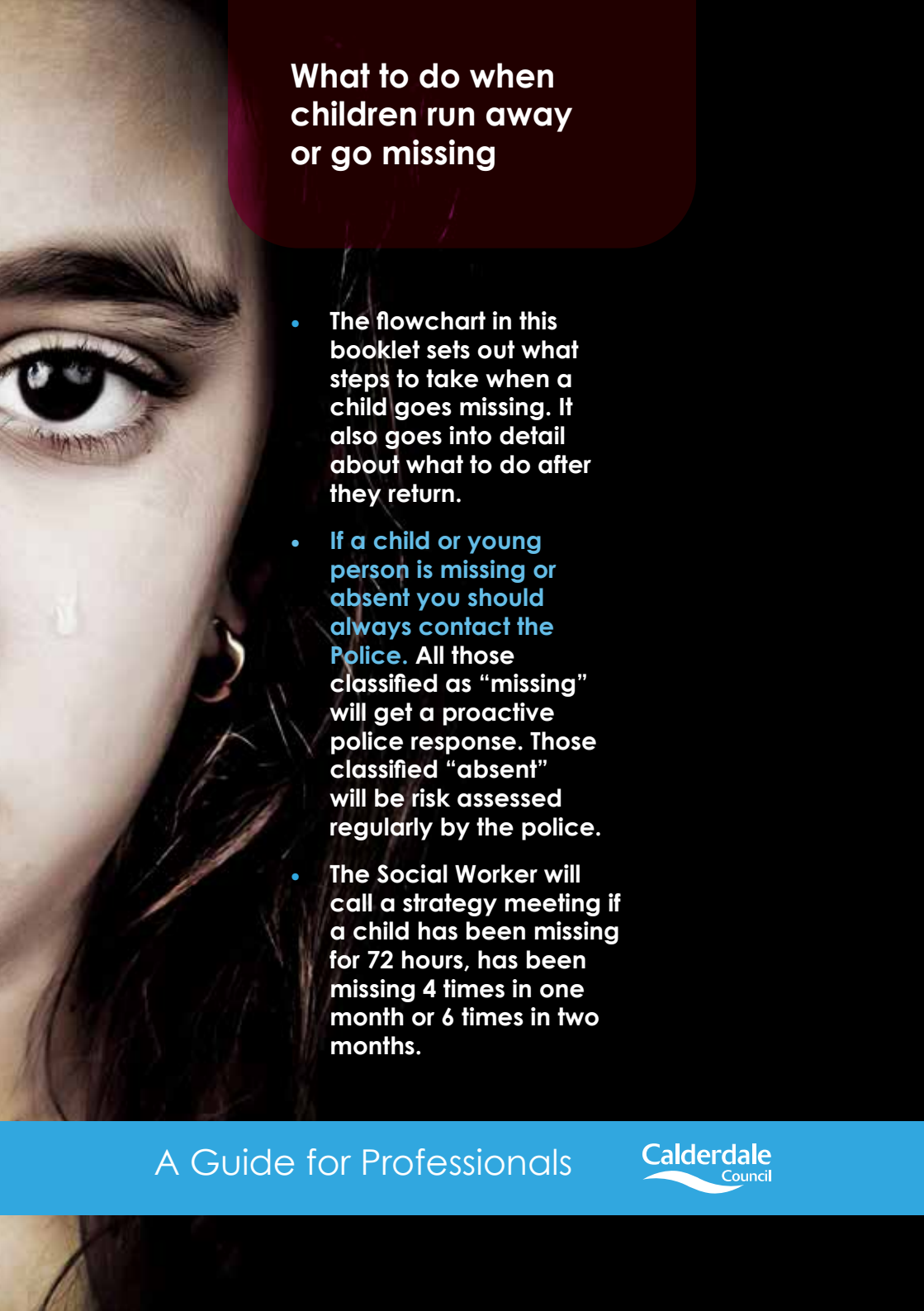
Where a child or young person is missing the Police should always be informed. You do not need to wait 24 hours- report straight away

Police definitions are as follows:

- **Missing:** The whereabouts of the child or young person are not known and the circumstances are out of character, or there is reason to believe that they are at risk of significant harm or of harming others.
- **Cause for Concern:** A child or young person is not at a place where they are expected to be. All Cause for concern cases will be recorded by the police and risk assessed regularly.

Other terms used by the local authority are:

- **Away from Placement without Authorisation:** The whereabouts of a child who is (looked after) are known but they are not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the carer has concerns or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the police (*see further information overleaf*).
- **Missing from care:** A child looked after who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be and their whereabouts are not known.



What to do when children run away or go missing

- The flowchart in this booklet sets out what steps to take when a child goes missing. It also goes into detail about what to do after they return.
- If a child or young person is missing or absent you should always contact the Police. All those classified as “missing” will get a proactive police response. Those classified “absent” will be risk assessed regularly by the police.
- The Social Worker will call a strategy meeting if a child has been missing for 72 hours, has been missing 4 times in one month or 6 times in two months.

Away from Placement without Authorisation / Unauthorised Absence

If a child goes missing from a children's home or other placement and **there is no obvious immediate risk and their whereabouts are known** steps should be taken by carers to:

- **Find out why they are absent**
- **Find out their likely intentions**
- **Establish their whereabouts and wellbeing**
- **Monitor risk and contact police if there is any concern.**

The Police will not treat a Young Person who is away from placement without authorisation as “**missing**” or a “**cause for concern**”. The Children's Home or other care placement should keep accurate records of the number of times absent without authorisation, length of time absent, location during absence and other information. The risk assessment should be continually updated and Police informed where risk identified.

Calderdale Procedures for Children Missing from Home or Care

Child/ Young Person Missing

Parent/Carer to contact West Yorkshire Police once 'Missing' Checklist is addressed.

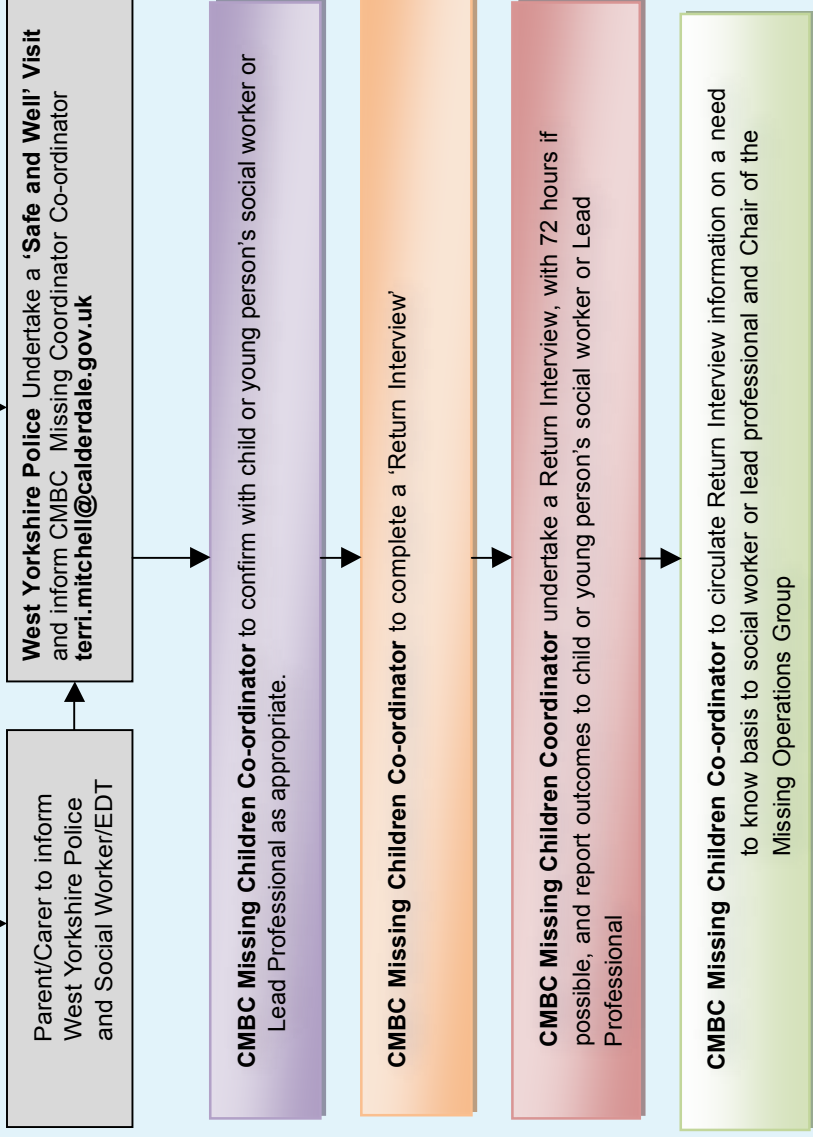
Foster Carers and Residential Carers to also report to Social Worker or EDT if out of hours(01422 288000)
Social Worker and/or EDT to email CMBC FIT Missing Co-ordinator

Fostering Service and Residential Homes
send daily reports on missing or away from placement without authorisation of young people

WYP Misper Officer sends daily report on missing children and young people

CMBC Missing Centre Co-ordinator
CMBC Missing Children team collates information and cascades with a pre-populated **Missing Children Report (MCR)** on CASS for action to be taken.

Child /Young Person is found or returns



For further information see Calderdale Council Missing Child Policy 2016
OR CONTACT : CMBC Missing Children Co-ordinator 07795128181
terri.mitchell@calderdale.gov.uk

**For further information
please contact:**

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please contact:**

- **Service Manager -**
Children Looked After
01422 392809
- **CMBC Vulnerable Children**
Missing Person Coordinator
01422 392683
07795128181
- **West Yorkshire Police**
101 - Non Emergency Number
- **Calderdale Children's
Social Care -**
01422 393336

