

SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO RUN AWAY OR GO MISSING POLICY AND PROCEDURE



All reference to personnel includes both paid employees and volunteers.

General Statement

Anglia Care Trust is committed to providing a safe and stable home environment for Young People. We recognise that there may be occasions when a Young Person may run away and that it is often a sign that there is something wrong in their life. Main reasons for running away are:

- Problems at home
- Mental health problems
- Bullying, racial harassment, homophobia
- Teenage pregnancy
- Wanting to be near friends or family
- Grooming for sexual exploitation
- Forced Marriage
- Child Trafficking

We commit to following the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board policies, in particular the Safeguarding Children who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care Policy, Procedures and Practice Guidance.

Procedure

If a Young Person fails to return home when expected and you are unable to contact them to clarify their whereabouts and satisfy yourself of their safety and you have done all you reasonably can to locate them, it is your responsibility to contact their social worker (if allocated a 16+ CYP worker) or Catch 22 worker (if a care leaver). If the Young Person goes missing out of hours, you must contact the Emergency Duty Service for these individuals. It will then be their responsibility to report the missing Young Person to the Police and follow the SCB Policy and Procedures. You will need to be able to provide full written details of the incident to help inform them and co-operate fully with all agencies involved to help trace the Young Person.

If the young person has no such worker, you must contact the Suffolk Police: Command and Control Room (CCR) on telephone number 101 or 999 in an emergency. You will need to be able to provide information to help the CCR categorise whether they are Absent or Missing. They may be classed as Absent if the risk assessment and surrounding information points towards not necessarily being at risk, where there is any doubt over their safety they will be categorized as Missing.

In all circumstances, when required, Anglia Care Trust will share information with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to help assess the risk to the Young Person. When the Young Person has returned home, you will facilitate any Police Safe and Well Check and Return Interview that is required. In addition, the Co-ordinator of the Service will undertake a Return Interview with the Young Person within 72 hours of

their return, if this has not already been undertaken by any other agency. The purpose of the Return Interview is to:

- Identify any harm the Young Person may have suffered – including harm that might not have been disclosed as part of the Safe and Well Check – either before they ran away or whilst missing
- Understand and try to address the reasons why they ran away
- Help the Young Person feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away
- Provide them with information on how to stay safe if they chose to run away again, including helpline numbers (such as The Missing People Charity who provide crisis support on 0800 800 7070).

You will then share the information from this interview with the MASH, complete a new risk assessment and put a support plan in place to address any emerging factors.

The MASH will use this information alongside the Safe and Well Check to:

- Build a comprehensive picture of why the young person went missing
- Understand what happened when they went missing
- Understand who they were with when they were missing and where they were found
- Understand what support they require.

If the Young Person refuses to take part in the interview, you may talk to other support workers and residents to try provide and relevant information and intelligence of which they may be aware.

Young People who have not been found

The Police and all agencies involved will monitor the progress of efforts to locate a young person. If this has not been achieved within 72 hours, then a strategy meeting should be called to review the situation. The Co-ordinator of the service has the responsibility of ensuring this happens, either convened by ACT or CYP/Catch 22 where appropriate.

Support for 16 and 17 year olds Missing

16 and 17 year olds who run away or go missing are not necessarily any less vulnerable than younger children and are likely to need as much support to get their lives on track and make a successful transition into adulthood. However, as young people over 16 can choose to leave home it may be necessary to involve other services such in the assessment of their needs. There are inter-agency arrangements for 'Young People of 16 & 17 years who are homeless' which must be used in these circumstances. Vulnerable young people need to be in a secure housing setting. No 16 or 17 year old should be placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation by housing or children's services, except in an emergency and for the shortest time possible, where B&B is the only available alternative to homelessness.

Date to be reviewed – October 2019