



Missing Persons Policy & Procedure

**Effective from:
22 August 2024**

1. Application of this document

- 1.1 YMCA St Paul's Group has the highest regard for the safety of all those that reside at and access our services. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a consistent and efficient response to reports of missing persons, with the key objective of safeguarding vulnerable missing persons and providing support to reduce the episodes of missing associated with individuals. If a child (including young people aged 16/17) goes missing from a YMCA St Pauls Group service, please consult the Business Continuity Plan, in conjunction with this procedure.

2. Definition

- 2.1 The definition of a missing adult is any vulnerable service user over the age of 18 (a resident or youth service attendee), whose whereabouts cannot be established, and will be considered as missing until located, and their wellbeing or otherwise confirmed. All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from 'no apparent risk' through to 'high-risk' cases that require immediate, intensive action and the involvement of statutory and/or emergency services (see appendix 1 for risk level clarification).
- 2.2 'Adults at risk' will always be considered potentially at risk of harm and should therefore be considered missing if their whereabouts cannot be established (see appendix 4).
- 2.3 A definition of an 'adult at risk' can be derived from section 42(1) of the Care Act 2014 as 'an adult who has needs for care or support, and is experiencing harm, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and because of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it'.
- 2.4 The definition of a missing child is any person under the age of 18, whose whereabouts cannot be established, and will be considered as missing until located, and their wellbeing or otherwise confirmed. All reports of missing children are high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action and the involvement of statutory and/or emergency services (see appendix 2 for children attending our CYF services and appendix 3a for young people aged 16/17 living in our supported accommodation).
- 2.5 A 'child at risk' will always be considered potentially at risk of harm and should therefore be considered missing if their whereabouts cannot be established.
- 2.6 In relation to a young person aged 16/17 who goes missing from a supported accommodation placement, or who does not return at the expected time, and staff are unable to contact or locate them the following definitions apply:
- ▶ **Missing from the placement** - A young person who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be and their whereabouts are not known.
 - ▶ **Away from Placement Without Authorisation** - A young person whose whereabouts are known but who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be and the staff have concerns or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the police.
 - ▶ **Young Runaway** - A young person who has run away from their home or placement or feels they have been forced or lured to leave.

- 2.7 Please use this procedure in conjunction with the Missing Persons incident reporting function via Inform – which can be [accessed here](#) or via the 'Report It' function on the Intranet (in the safeguarding section).

3 Introduction

- 3.1 The purpose of this document is to:

- ▶ Safeguard the wellbeing of our vulnerable service users, in particular children and young people;
- ▶ Ensure that all National and Local protocols are followed, in particular in relation to children and young people going missing;
- ▶ Ensure that YMCA St Paul's Group meets its obligations in relation to regulations, quality standards and compliance objectives;
- ▶ Ensure that residents, including young people, have freedom of choice and privacy, this includes the choice to leave the service;
- ▶ Ensure that staff understand their role and responsibility in the safety of our service users;
- ▶ Any response to a 'missing person' will be proportionate, considered and reasonable.

- 3.2 This document provides staff with a procedure to follow in the event of a vulnerable individual who uses the service going missing.

This can be broken down to four categories:

- a. Children and young people (under 18) accessing Children, Youth & Families services - see section 4 and Appendix 2
- b. Young persons (aged 16 -17) residing in our young person's supported accommodation services - see section 5 and Appendix 3
- c. Adult Housing residents (above 18 years of age) – see section 6 and Appendix 4
- d. Child living with or visiting a resident – see section 7 and Appendix 5

- 3.3 All staff must be alert to the whereabouts of the individuals who use our services, as much as is reasonably possible.

- 3.4 Residents can come and go from most of our services, at their leisure, and therefore, a resident who is not seen for a period of time, does not necessarily signify that they are missing.

- 3.5 The exceptions to this are services that provide housing support to persons under the age of 18 and are in the care of the local authority. YMCA St Paul's Group will ensure that risk assessments are undertaken when a young person moves into these services and developed accordingly when a resident who is known to go missing and/or putting themselves at risk. Please see section 5 (detail) and Appendix 3a (flowchart).

- 3.6 If an adult resident is determined as being particularly vulnerable, currently on the safeguarding list, has known mental health concerns, or is placed on our 'at risk' register, and their whereabouts is unknown for more than 48 hours, then the procedure outlined within this document to report a missing person must be followed.

- 3.7 If in doubt about a resident's whereabouts (whether a young person or an adult), or if another staff member or resident, emergency services, resident's family member, member of the public or professional, raises concerns about a resident as missing, then following the procedure set out in this document is the immediate action to take. Always discuss concerns with your line manager, a regional manager, or with a Designated Safeguarding Officer in line with the safeguarding procedure.

4 Child or Young Person goes missing whilst meant to be in our sessions/care (registered childcare and other children and youth activities)

4.1 Stage 1: First 15 minutes of a child being declared as missing:

- 4.1.1 The member of staff in question will inform both the CYF manager, and any other relevant staff on site that the child is missing.
- 4.1.2 ** If young person/child has a mobile phone this should be called by member of staff. **
- 4.1.3 A headcount and register check will be done immediately to make sure no other children are missing.
- 4.1.4 The Lead worker must talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen.
- 4.1.5 All doors will be checked for signs of exit and also CCTV followed by checking of all rooms, cupboards, and likely hiding places in the immediate indoor/outdoor area. This will be carried out quickly and without panic.
- 4.1.6 One member of staff will leave the room and conduct a thorough search of the entire building/grounds, whilst the other searches are taking place. The staff team will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised. At no time will the other children be put at risk by being left alone during the search. During this period, other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children.

4.2 Stage 2: After 15 minutes of a child or young person going missing – Contact the child's Parent/carer:

- 4.2.1 If the child is still missing after 15 minutes of thorough searching of the full site at which the scheme is based then the CYF manager should first contact the parent/carer and inform them fully of the situation.
- 4.2.2 This is to ensure that there is no risk that the parent/carer has somehow managed to collect the child without staff being aware, or to enquire if the young person has already returned home. If this is what has happened, then a meeting must be arranged with the parent/carer and the CYF manager to review our arrivals and departures policy & procedure clearly.
- 4.2.3 If the parent/carer does not have their child or know where they are, then they must be asked to come to the location immediately. They must also be informed that the police will be contacted.
- 4.2.4 The CYF manager must be kept informed and be part of the decision to call the Police. At this point the Head of CYF should be contacted who will inform the Director of Operations to activate the Business Continuity Plan.

4.3 Stage 3: Contacting the Police

4.3.1 When calling the police staff must be prepared to give the following information:

- ▶ Staff name
- ▶ what has happened
- ▶ where they have gone missing from (address)
- ▶ Child's name
- ▶ Child's age
- ▶ Time of incident
- ▶ Home address of the child
- ▶ Parent/carers contact details

4.3.2 While waiting for the police to arrive, the search must continue with staff constantly thinking of the last time the child in question was seen and where. Attempts to continue to contact the child should be continued periodically.

4.3.3 All staff must be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the area.

4.3.4 At no time will the other children be put at risk by being left alone during the search. As normal routine as possible must be maintained with other summer scheme continuing and staff taking care not to panic other parents/ carers or children.

4.3.5 If future sessions have to be cancelled to allow for the incident to be dealt with, this must be done so following the 'Emergency Closures procedure'

4.4 Stage 4: After the Police Arrive

4.4.1 The CYF manager will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers. If the CYF manager is not present, they must make every effort to get to the location.

4.4.2 If this is not possible then the Staff member in charge will be responsible, as long as they are employed by YMCASPG (not Self Employed). The CYF manager must also aim to be there. If this is not possible another Head of Department will be asked to attend.

4.5 Reporting

4.5.1 Once the incident is resolved, the CYF manager and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant provisions of the Site Security and Risk Assessment policies).

4.5.2 A full report must be written regardless of the outcome.

4.5.3 The CYF manager and any staff members involved in the incident must write a joint incident report detailing:

- ▶ The date and time of the report.

- ▶ What staff/children were in the play scheme.
- ▶ When the child was last seen in the play scheme.
- ▶ What has taken place in the play scheme since the child went missing.
- ▶ The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

- 4.5.4 The CYF manager must carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff involved.
- 4.5.5 A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- 4.5.6 If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff must co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- 4.5.7 The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- 4.5.8 The insurance provider is informed.
- 4.5.9 OFSTED is to be informed of any episode where child went missing from one of our registered childcare settings. The Nominated Individual for Registered Childcare must do this as soon as reasonably possible, and no more than 14 days from when the event happened.
- 4.5.10 Consult the Business Continuity Plan, in conjunction with this procedure (specifically page 26 / 27 – lost child), if reporting to media.

4.6 Managing people

- 4.6.1 Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- 4.6.2 The staff will feel worried about the child. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- 4.6.3 Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The CYF manager needs to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable by linking them into HR or to the organisations Chaplaincy team, and or counselling service.
- 4.6.4 The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the CYF manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the head of CYF and the other should be the CYF manager. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- 4.6.5 In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Head of Department will consult the CEO who will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

4.6.6 Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

5 Young person aged 16-17 living in one of our young person's housing projects goes missing/ is suspected missing

When the Young Person is considered missing

- 5.1 Please refer to Appendix 3a for an easy-to-follow flowchart on what to do.
- 5.2 Young persons can come and go from our service with prior communication and agreement with support staff/ site manager, and therefore, a young person who is not seen for a period of time does not necessarily signify that they are missing.
- 5.3 Site staff and the young person(s) must develop collaborative communication from the outset. These must be documented within support plans and risk assessments / management plans, regarding the planned movements and activities that means the young person will have the freedom to be away from the service for a period of time.
- 5.4 Staff must keep a list of residents at reception and log if they have been seen that day - this will act as an information record to support incidences of missing people – with 16- and 17-year-olds highlighted so any member of staff can easily see who is under 18. The young person will be required to sign an agreement when they move in which informs them of this procedure and our expectations in relation to them informing staff of their whereabouts.
- 5.5 It is expected that a young person must make all efforts to effectively communicate to the staff at the service they reside, if they are going to return to the service later than the agreed or expected time. A phone call communicating where they are and how long they will be and/or expect to return must be placed. Young people are expected to always communicate, with staff, a plan to be away from the service for an extended period of time. They should do this prior to departing from the service, informing staff where they are going and for how long they intent to be away for. If possible, the young person should leave contact details for where they are visiting and are advised to store the YMCA site contact number in case of an emergency or requirement to contact staff.
- 5.6 If a young person does not return to the by 10pm, staff must make every effort to contact them. This includes calling the resident, sending a message to them, knocking on their door, and calling their next of kin. If they do not receive a response by 10.30pm, then the staff member must report them as a missing person. Staff must document on Inform the times and dialogue of the communication as well as complete a safeguarding 'missing persons' alert on Inform.
- 5.7 If the young person has not returned home at the expected time, and they can be contacted, then clear communication must be sought with agreement about what time the individual must return. In these instances, timely phone communication must be agreed to monitor the whereabouts of the individual until their safe return. If they do not answer and are later than stated, then staff must report them as a missing person. Staff must document on Inform the times and dialogue of the communication.
- 5.8 If in doubt about a young person's whereabouts, or if another staff member or resident, emergency services, resident's family member, member of the public or professional, raises concerns about young resident as missing, then following the procedure set out in this document is the immediate action to take. Always discuss concerns with the Registered Services Manager, Site Manager, your Line Manager, a Regional

Manager, or with a Designated Safeguarding Officer in line with the safeguarding procedure. Local Authority missing persons policy and procedure must also be consulted in conjunction with communication with the Local Authority.

- 5.9 If relevant, where a young person has a history or is at risk of absconding / going missing, staff must follow the Philomena Protocol if the Local Authority adheres to the protocol (see Appendix 3b for an example - each Local Authority will have their own version of the Philomena protocol, unless they have decided not to utilise the protocol). **The Missing Persons Protocol** needs to be followed and the resident should have a **Missing with Cause for Concern Risk Management Plan**. These should always be followed as these are specific to the young person.

- 5.10 If a young person is at risk of exploitation or is a risk to themselves or others, then it is important that a **Trigger Plan** is agreed between the Local Police, Missing Coordinators and Local Authority. This plan gives specific information for those who are more at risk than others and require a more stringent procedure to be in place.

- 5.11 It is important to establish whether the young person is missing or absent. The police classification of a person as 'Missing' or 'Absent' will be based on their on-going risk assessment. Note that 'absent' within the police definition would not include those defined as 'away from Placement' without authorisation. A young person whose whereabouts are known, however who haven't returned home at the expected time would not be treated as either 'Missing' or 'Absent' under the police definitions.

- 5.12 Police will not be sent to cases where young people are defined as being 'absent'. Instead, the onus will be on YMCA St Paul's Group, in conjunction with the referring authority providers, to take steps to locate the young person with monitoring by the police and escalation to 'missing' if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk (please see risk matrix within the accompanying missing young person's procedure).

- 5.13 It is expected that all reasonable steps should be taken by supported accommodation providers to locate the young person prior to making a report to the police. Where they remain absent, and the supported accommodation provider feels that they may be at risk of harm, then a report should be made to the police. Police will attend to any reports of 'missing' young people.

- 5.14 If safe to do so, staff should undertake enquiries locally. This may include a thorough check of the service and may include contacting people who know the young person or going out to look for them. If the young person has become absent during an activity away from the service, or when they are on their own free time, staff should conduct a search of the vicinity if it is safe to do so. Searches should take place at the documented potential whereabouts that are stipulated on their Missing Persons Protocol.

- 5.15 If staff are satisfied that the young person is missing and they cannot establish the whereabouts of the young person and cannot contact them, then they should follow the Missing Persons Protocol and report the young person as missing with a cause for concern.

- 5.16 Staff must also ensure that the family/ next of kin (someone as identified as suitable to contact on Inform), referring authority and any key relevant professional working with the young person are notified as soon as practicably possible.

- 5.17 At this stage, the Registered Services Manager and Head of Housing, Care and Support (Nominated Individual) must be notified. The local Site Manager will lead on communication with the police and referring authority, and family if relevant to do so and will keep the Registered Services Manager and Nominated Individual informed.

- 5.18 Staff are to follow guidance from the lead investigating manager and ensure that all relevant information, including all actions and key dialogue relevant to the missing young person and contacts are documented on Inform.

When the Young Person returns

- 5.19 Upon return of the Young Person, the Police, Social Worker, YOT Worker and others in the professional network notified of the absence must be informed when the young person returns; this is stated in the Missing Persons Protocol.
- 5.20 The young person must be welcomed back and must have the opportunity to talk about the reasons for being missing from the provision.
- 5.21 At the request of the young person or where there are concerns about a young person who frequently becomes absent or missing, the Registered Service Manager and Site Manager should consider arranging a meeting between the young person and the placing authority to consider the reasons for going missing. If the Social Worker is unable to see the young person, an independent professional or Registered Services Manager and or Site Manager may meet the young person on the Social Worker's behalf.
- 5.22 The police may wish to carry out a 'Safe and Well' check for any indications that the young person has suffered harm; where and with whom they have been; and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by, or against, them. However, where the young person goes missing frequently, the police are unlikely to see them every time they return and a reasonable decision will be taken with regard to the frequency of such checks.
- 5.23 An [Independent Return Interview](#) should be carried out by an independent professional (e.g. a social worker, teacher, health professional or police officer, who does not usually work with the young person and is trained to carry out these interviews). Young People sometimes need to build up trust with a person before they will discuss in depth the reasons why they ran away. This will be clearly documented in the Missing Persons Protocol and individual's Risk Management Plan.
- 5.24 The responsible Local Authority should ensure the Return Interview takes place, working closely with the host authority (if different). Contact should be made with the young person within 72 hours of them being located or returning from absence, to arrange an Independent Return Interview in a neutral place where they feel safe. It is also the responsibility of the staff at the provision to ensure that the return interview is carried out and that all persons have been informed.
- 5.25 Where a looked after young person has been missing they should have the opportunity to talk, before they return to their placement, to a person who is independent of their placement about the reasons they went missing. The young person should be offered the option of speaking to an independent representative or advocate.
- 5.26 A debrief must also be completed within 14 days of the missing episode. This should be conducted by staff at the provision. Consideration must be given to the environment of the debrief and how it should be conducted. The staff who carry out the debrief must ensure that they look at prevention strategies, coping mechanisms and restorative justice to prevent it from re-occurring. A missing episode is classed as an incident and as such must be reviewed by the Registered Service Manager and Site Manager and with the Registered Service Manager having ultimate responsibility to oversee the whole process.

Prolonged Period of Absence

- 5.27 The Registered Services Manager must be made aware of the episode on the next working morning if out of hours.
- 5.28 Staff should consult/update the police and social worker/YOT Worker every day for the first 7 days, or as new information is available, to review the Strategies that can be adopted to find and return the young person.
- 5.29 Staff must also ensure that each person in the professional network is informed. This could include any specialised co-ordinators for Missing Persons in the Local Authority or Police Service.
- 5.30 After 72 hours, the police will notify the National Missing Persons Bureau.
- 5.31 If the young person is still absent after 7 days the Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) must be notified/consulted to decide what actions to take e.g:
 - ▶ The convening of a [Strategy Discussion](#);
 - ▶ Use by the Police of their powers to recover the young person, for example, placing
 - ▶ a young person in [Police Protection](#);
 - ▶ An application for a [Recovery Order](#);
 - ▶ An application for a [Secure Accommodation Order](#);
 - ▶ The use of publicity.
- 5.32 It is important to remember that Local Protocols must be followed. This may mean that the Missing Coordinator for the Local Police or Authority will take the lead on instigating the procedures above.
- 5.33 Any actions taken to recover the young person and return them to the provision, or a place of safety must focus on promoting the young person's welfare and must take account of their support needs, legal status, age, understanding and level of risk posed to them or others.
- 5.34 If a young person is found but refuses to return, then staff must consult the Social Worker or, in an emergency or where the young person or others are seriously at risk, call the police. Any actions taken should preferably be with the co-operation or by negotiation with the young person.

Information Sharing and Recording

- 5.35 When notifying/informing the police (in the area where they have become absent) and Social Worker or others e.g. Youth Offending Worker/Team, it is vital to provide information about the circumstances and risk factors that led to the notification; but it is also important to discuss possible strategies for finding and recovering the young person safely. Agreement should also be reached about others who may need to know the child is Absent or Missing e.g., parents or members of the professional network.
- 5.36 The Support Plan should be reviewed regularly and after any absence, and will require the following information:
 - ▶ A description of the young person, possibly a photograph;
 - ▶ When the young person was last seen and with whom;
 - ▶ A recent photograph of the young person;
 - ▶ Family addresses;

- ▶ Other addresses of people the young person may make contact with;
- ▶ Any previous history of the young person going missing;
- ▶ The name and address of the young person's GP and Dentist.

- 5.37 The police, social worker and others notified must then be updated as circumstances change and when the young person returns.
- 5.38 Staff must record the incident on the following and update these records as circumstances change or decisions/actions taken:
- ▶ Daily Record
 - ▶ Incident or safeguarding report
 - ▶ Risk Management Plans
- 5.39 The Registered Services Manager and Site/Services Manager on shift must also be notified and kept up to date with any missing episode.
- 5.40 Certain, and in particular serious concerns over a young person's missing behaviour are reportable to OFSTED. This would include if the young person is considered to be at grave risk due to age or vulnerability or if they have been missing for a considerable period of time and their whereabouts are unknown.
- 5.41 When it has been established that a missing episode has met the OFSTED reporting threshold the Registered Services Manager or Nominated Individual will notify Ofsted. Ofsted will notify how they wish to be kept updated about the missing incident and may want to see evidence of steps taken to locate the young person, and the process that took place after staff became aware that the whereabouts of the young person was unknown. With view to this, it is vital that staff dealing with the missing incident clearly document the steps taken during investigation and communication process of attempting to locate the missing young person. This will include the missing person protocol and risk management plans that were in place prior to the young person going missing (if relevant). Therefore, it is essential that these documents are formalised and kept updated during a young person's residency with us.

6 Adult Housing Resident (aged 18+) goes missing/ is suspected missing

- 6.1 For housing residents, during intake, all individuals who use our services must have a profile completed via the referral and assessment, risk assessment and risk management plan on Inform (see support pathway procedure). If a resident is identified as "high-risk", then a risk assessment must also be completed on the likelihood of an individual going missing / absconding and the probable risks associated with this, particularly associated to the identified risk of the individual.
- 6.2 Strategies must be in place to pre-empt and prevent such a situation occurring. Risk assessments and management plans will be created on Inform, and can be updated in resident reviews, if risks change, or incidents occur. Resident profiles should be updated, and pictures changed, if necessary (reference Support pathway Policy & Procedure).
- 6.3 Staff must refer to this information, should a resident go missing. It is also vital that staff update contact notes and support meeting logs, on Inform. Keeping residents contact notes updated supports developing a clear account of resident's movements, interactions, and whereabouts, as much as is possible, within the remit of supported housing. This information is of importance in situations such as when a resident's whereabouts is unknown, and or if another professional, or emergency service is enquiring about their whereabouts. If there is uncertainty about confidentiality, please speak to your manager for support.

6.4 What to do if a resident goes missing:

- 6.4.1 Actions to follow in the event a Housing resident goes missing/ is suspected as missing are as follows.
- 6.4.2 It is vital that all members of staff work as a team. Housing / support staff are to check Inform resident profile, timeline, risk assessments and daily records to establish whether the resident is on a prearranged reason for their absence. The residents key worker or the housing service manager should make efforts to contact the resident, or the people associated with them / their place of work / family connections and associates, to check their whereabouts and that they are safe.
- 6.4.3 Upon receiving a missing person's report, the key support worker and senior manager should carry out the following steps / actions:
- a. Establish when the person was last seen, who the last person was that saw them and question them about the resident's known plans and movements.
 - b. Record this information on Inform (CCIA) as a Missing Person. This will escalate the incident to the appropriate senior staff member(s). Alert all staff to the possibility of the resident being missing and ask for information / sightings.
 - c. Arrange a thorough search of the accommodation and grounds, checking that the resident is not on-site or in the vicinity of the building.
 - d. Knowledge of the resident and their usual movements and habits should be applied.
 - e. Staff should determine places the resident could be at, to eliminate possibilities.
 - f. At the end of the search, the manager must be confident that the accommodation and its grounds have been systematically searched, including the resident own room, toilet and known places of interest.
- 6.4.4 If no sign or information of the resident can be found, or if information is provided from either staff or other residents or another information source, that raises concern that the resident may be at risk, then the local police should be alerted. Contact members of the missing resident's family if they have not already been contacted.
- 6.4.5 Ensure Inform CCIA – Missing persons Incident Report Form is completed by staff.
- 6.4.6 If the resident has been found, it is essential that all the parties who were advised of the emergency, are contacted again and informed that the search has been concluded, and notes on Inform updated.

6.5 Reporting to be carried out following a resident going missing

- 6.5.1 Staff must record any significant incident on Inform and update the Risk Assessment and risk management plan accordingly. This should be made available for review. The recording on the missing persons form should include the time frame that the person went missing and the actions taken, by staff, after the person has been identified as missing.

- 6.5.2 If the resident was injured or harmed or was seriously at risk of being harmed as a result of going missing, the manager will need to follow internal procedures relating to the reporting on Inform of an accident or injury.
- 6.5.3 If a complaint is made against a member of staff, because of a resident going missing/ being suspected as being missing, the matter will be investigated through our Complaints Policy.
- 6.5.4 The lead manager to continue liaising with the missing's family, the police, and all relevant key persons and professionals that are associated with them. All relevant information must be updated on Inform.
- 6.5.5 The lead manager to liaise with the Head of Housing, Care & Support and safeguarding leads to consider relevant action, policy & procedural and risk assessment reviewing, continued investigation processes and training facilitation. Any breaches or lapses in best practice, in conjunction with support pathway policies must be brought to the attention of the executive team and follow up investigation processes determined and actioned.

7 A child living with or visiting a resident goes/ is suspected missing

- 7.1 In some of our services we accommodate residents with their babies/ children or the child/ren of a resident may visit.
- 7.2 Should we be alerted or suspect that one of these children/ babies is missing, we must, after an initial search of the building and grounds of the property, alert the police.
- 7.3 Children living with a resident will also be reported as missing if they were not returned as planned after visiting relatives/ friends.
- 7.4 In all cases, the local staff, in liaison with their manager, will alert the police and then inform the Regional Housing Manager. If the child/ family has a social worker already involved, the social worker should also be informed.
- 7.5 When calling the police staff must be prepared to give the following information:
 - ▶ Staff name
 - ▶ what has happened
 - ▶ where they have gone missing from (address)
 - ▶ Child's name
 - ▶ Child's age
 - ▶ Time of incident
 - ▶ Home address of the child
 - ▶ Parent/carers contact details
 - ▶ Description of the child (including what they were wearing)
- 7.6 After the police arrive the local manager will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers. If the local manager is not present, they must make every effort to get to the location or ensure a suitable deputy is dealing with the situation. If this is not possible then the Staff member in charge will be responsible, as long as they are employed by YMCA SPG (not agency).

- 7.7 Once the incident is resolved, a full report must be written regardless of the outcome.
- 7.8 The local manager and any staff members involved in the incident must write a joint incident report (form can be [accessed here](#) or via the 'Report It' function on the intranet under safeguarding) detailing:
- ▶ The date and time of the report
 - ▶ When the child was last seen
 - ▶ What has taken place since the child went missing
 - ▶ The time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - ▶ The outcome
- 7.9 If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff must co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- 7.10 **Managing people**
- 7.1.1 Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- 7.1.2 Everyone will feel worried about the child and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- 7.1.3 In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, everyone involved may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Head of Department will consult the CEO who will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- 7.1.4 Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice. Consult the Business Continuity Plan, in conjunction with this procedure (specifically page 26 / 27 – lost child) if reporting to media.

8 Risk matrixes (Low / Moderate / High)

- 8.1 Please refer to the risk matrixes in Appendix 1 to support identification of relevant risk levels when considering what steps to take following the identification of a missing person.
- 8.2 Please refer to the appended missing persons flow charts for quick access to procedures to follow, following the identification of a missing person, (broken down into child and young persons accessing a CYF activity / missing young person residing in one of our young person's projects/ missing adult resident).
- 8.3 When assessing risk, the following should be taken into consideration:

HIGH RISK A resident/ young person is automatically High Risk in the following circumstances	OTHER RISK FACTORS These are risks/indicators that should be considered when assessing those who do not automatically fall into the High Risk Category
▶ If the resident/ Young person is Remanded or otherwise Lawfully Detained; ▶ she/he Absconded; ▶ The resident/ young person's death may occur; ▶ The resident/ young person may be at risk of serious injury or harm, e.g. from adverse weather conditions or their inability to stay safe; ▶ The resident/ young person requires essential medication/medical attention; ▶ The resident/ young person is likely to suffer significant harm; ▶ The resident/ young person may come into contact with a person who may pose them a risk. ▶ They may be injured, including self-injury, and require medical attention; ▶ There is a warrant for their arrest; ▶ They may commit a violent or criminal offence; ▶ They may be abducted; ▶ If the young person's name is on the list for a young person subject to a Young Person Protection Plan; ▶ The resident/ young person is subject to Police Protection; ▶ The resident/ young person is subject to an Emergency Protection Order or Recovery Order.	▶ Any guidance agreed within the Support Plan ▶ Vulnerability due to age; Particularly vulnerable (e.g. Learning/Physical disability, or young person subject to a young person Protection Plan); ▶ In need of regular medication (e.g. diabetic); ▶ Previous history of being missing; ▶ History of self-harming; ▶ Possible involvement in crime; ▶ Health, including mental health; ▶ Weather (e.g. severe cold or heat), or geography (e.g. remote area); ▶ Dependency on drugs and/or alcohol; ▶ Known vulnerability of the resident/ young person, raising concern that they may have been led into danger, including sexual exploitation; ▶ Known associates that give rise to heightened concerns over the missing person's safety (e.g. associates known to be involved in criminal activities); ▶ Degree of risk to the public; ▶ Recent significant events, contributory factors, and the person's state of mind at the time of the absence; Time of day/night; Legal status.

- 8.4 Other factors that should be considered:

Age and level of understanding	Age is a factor, but not alone. Also consider level of understanding, ability to make informed decisions, the person's ability to operate in urban or rural environments, social and life skills, disability etc. The more able the person is, the less concern staff should have.
Number of Absences	Consider the number of times the resident/ young person has absented him/herself and from what situations. For example, young people who have absented themselves from similar accommodations and returned safely may be of less concern than those who are not known to staff or who do not normally absent themselves.
Behaviour whilst absent	Consider what the resident/ young person does or is suspected to get involved in whilst absent on previous occasions. Also consider how recent such problems have been. Higher levels of concern should be attributed to those who are known recently to have placed themselves or others at risk of significant harm. The factors that may result in higher levels of concern are that the person has previously: ▶ Made contact with people who pose a risk to them; ▶ Been abducted; ▶ Self- injured or attempted suicide; ▶ Committed or been associated with a serious or criminal offence; ▶ Is a substance / alcohol abuser ▶ Associated with gangs ▶ Been subject to sexual exploitation; ▶ Or other serious risks/concerns such as radicalisation / prostitution / county lines / criminal activity
Circumstances on the day	The following are examples of circumstances, which may be considered in deciding the level of concern on the day. The fact that they apply does not automatically mean there is a high level of concern; the decision rests with the manager having considered all the circumstances: ▶ Out of character/unusual behaviour prior to disappearance; ▶ Absence with no prior indication; ▶ Possibility of sexual exploitation or being drawn into offending behaviour.

9 Training for staff

- 9.1 All staff are trained in the missing persons procedure and to know their role in the event of a search, as part of their line management induction. The missing persons procedure may also be referred to within safeguarding training sessions.

10 Monitoring

- 10.1 This procedure will be monitored as part of the quarterly and annual safeguarding reporting process and missing person figures included in the reports.

Risk Matrix for person (adult or young person) at risk

Low Risk

There is no apparent threat of danger to the individual, staff or visitors if the individual is reported as being a missing person.

- ▶ Any individual whose whereabouts are unknown but who is not thought to pose a risk to themselves or others.
 - ▶ Any individual who may have made their way to the home of a friend or peer and is thought to be safe until agreement about return can be made.
 - ▶ Any individual who has the capacity to safely leave an area by themselves, however, has done this and has not returned to the area for some time.
1. There is no requirement to notify the police, social worker (where applicable), or next of kin (unless it is a **young person that has not returned 2 hours after the 10pm curfew** and no communication has been offered by the young person as to their whereabouts).
 2. Review of Risks for a young person aged 16/17: every 2 hours or as circumstances changes; if the young person is absent/missing, in this category, for a total of up to 6 hours during the day or 2 hours after curfew they automatically become Medium Risk.
 3. On location of the missing person, Manager to be informed and to conduct a debrief with missing person to ascertain reason for going missing and where the person has been.

Medium Risk

The risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger or they are a threat to others.

- ▶ The individual's behaviour may be a risk to themselves or others around them.
 - ▶ The individual may show dramatic changes in behaviour that may cause danger or risk to others.
 - ▶ An individual's prolonged absence without medication places them at high risk.
-
1. If individual is identified as missing, follow missing person policy and procedure.
 2. Confirm search of buildings and grounds at centre.
 3. Confirm search of buildings, grounds and immediate vicinity of the service.
 4. Make contact with relatives or people at home address to advise them Keep a log of who has been contacted, when, by whom and the outcome.
 5. Make all other reasonable enquiries (friends or relatives) to establish whereabouts of Missing person.
 6. Keep a log of who has been contacted, when, by whom and the outcome.
 7. Undertake a review of risk status.
 8. If not located within **1 – 2hrs of becoming medium risk**, then re-classify as a high-risk incident. If located Person In Charge will assess the individual's well-being and conduct de briefing session with the missing person to ascertain reason for going missing and where the person has been.

To be considered specifically for 16/17 year old residents considered as medium risk:

Notifications: The Police, social worker and parents may be consulted or verbally notified as a concern for their whereabouts, for information, but there is no requirement to notify them formally as missing.

Review of Risks: Every 2 hours or as circumstances change. If a missing young person remains in the Medium Category for a total of up to 6 hours s/he automatically falls into High Level Category.

High Risk

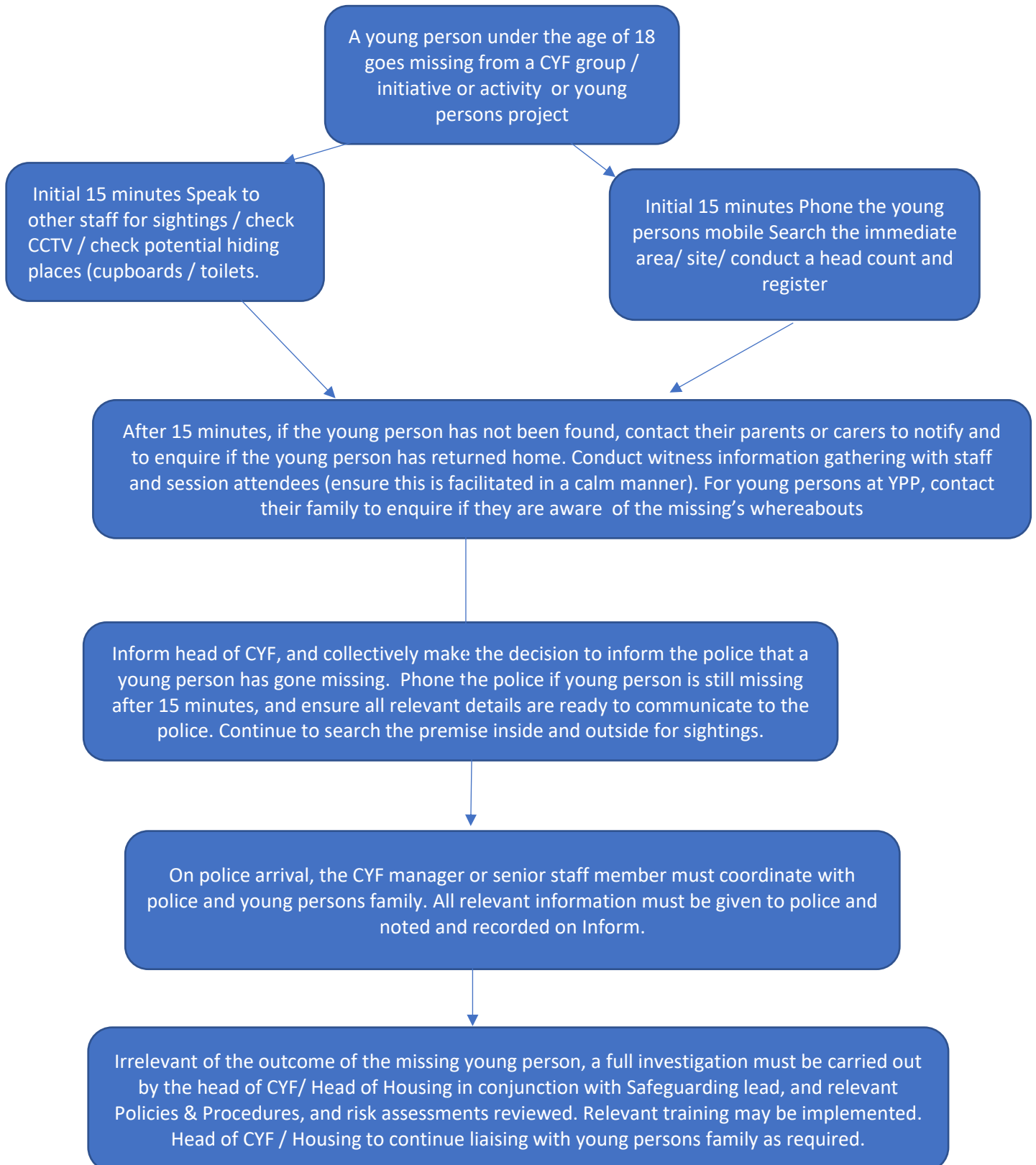
The risk posed is immediate and there are individual substantial grounds for believing that the danger or risk posed to the individual or others around them is substantial and may cause serious potential harm or injury.

- ▶ Individual who, due to their diagnosis of epilepsy, is likely to have a seizure posing a threat to their wellbeing or life
 - ▶ Individual known to show risk behaviours that may cause physical harm to themselves or others.
 - ▶ Individual may be unaware of external dangers.
 - ▶ Individual poses a serious risk to themselves through self-harm or self-injury.
 - ▶ Individuals who suffer from intense physical pain or individual who have mental health problems which would be greatly exacerbated without the use of medication or a substance abuse issue.
1. If a high-risk individual is identified as missing, follow relevant missing person policy and procedures (depending on age of individual).
 2. Confirm search of buildings and grounds at centre.
 3. Confirm search of buildings, grounds and immediate vicinity of main site
 4. Contact friends, colleagues, relatives to advise them and to seek communication of any sighting or known whereabouts.
 5. Keep a log of who has been contacted, when, by whom and the outcome.
 6. The Person in Charge must also alert the regional manager and Registered Services Manager for 16/17 year old residents, or head of department, as soon as possible.
 7. When located, Person In Charge, must review and conduct risk assessment.
 8. If not located **within 1hr** the police must be informed.
 9. Review support plans and risk assessments about the missing individual if requested/ needed
 10. When located Manager must review and conduct risk assessment.
 11. Complete a safeguarding referral (for 16/17 year olds, this must be to the referring authority).

To be considered specifically for 16/17 year old residents considered as high risk:

The social worker must be notified as soon as practicable. The social worker should decide whether to notify the parent(s) and, if so, who should do so. If the young person has absconded whilst lawfully detained, the Youth Offending Team (YOT) must be notified.

Missing Persons Flowchart Child and Young Person (under 18) accessing CYF sessions



Missing Persons Flowchart – Young Person aged 16-17 residing in one of our Young People Accommodation Projects

10pm - Identify the young person is missing

Try to locate the young person

Staff should make enquiries to locate the missing young person by calling the resident, sending a message to them, knocking on their door, and calling their next of kin and where possible places of work or study, recreation facilities etc.

If the young person is not located

Report to the police by 10.30pm

If the young person is located and will be back later

Staff to get more information and follow up at expected time.

If the young person is not located at the later time – report to police

If the young person returns

Staff to record on Inform any information

If contact with the young person is made

Staff to record on Inform any information received – including if they are at home or if they are staying out.

Staff report the young person as missing (ring the police via 999 or report via

<https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/mp/v2/report-missing-person/>) and email Registered Services Manager

Give them details of the missing person including full name, DOB, description of the young person, what they were wearing when last seen, medical history, a recent photo, time and location last seen, circumstances of going missing, details of family/ friends/ associates.

Police officers conduct a risk assessment

This will determine the next steps and enquiries are then ongoing - sharing of information between the police and other agencies will be done as appropriate.

If the young person is found/ returns home

When the missing young person is located, staff need to ensure their safe return to the accommodation. The police is likely to assist with this.

Staff and police to conduct a return interview to establish the young person's wellbeing and to establish if they were the victim of crime or abuse whilst missing.

If warranted, police should refer the young person to Children's Services via normal safeguarding channels.

Staff to ensure the young person's risk assessment is reviewed and updated on Inform and a missing person's incident is logged on Inform.

If the young person is not located

The lead manager must inform the Registered Manager and Nominated Individual who will inform the Executive Lead for Safeguarding.

Staff to ensure that all relevant persons associated with the young person are notified and that notes and documentation on Inform are updated.

Staff to ensure a missing person's incident is logged on Inform

The Executive lead for Safeguarding will escalate to the Chief Executive and Board.

Police liaison will continue and determine any timeframes



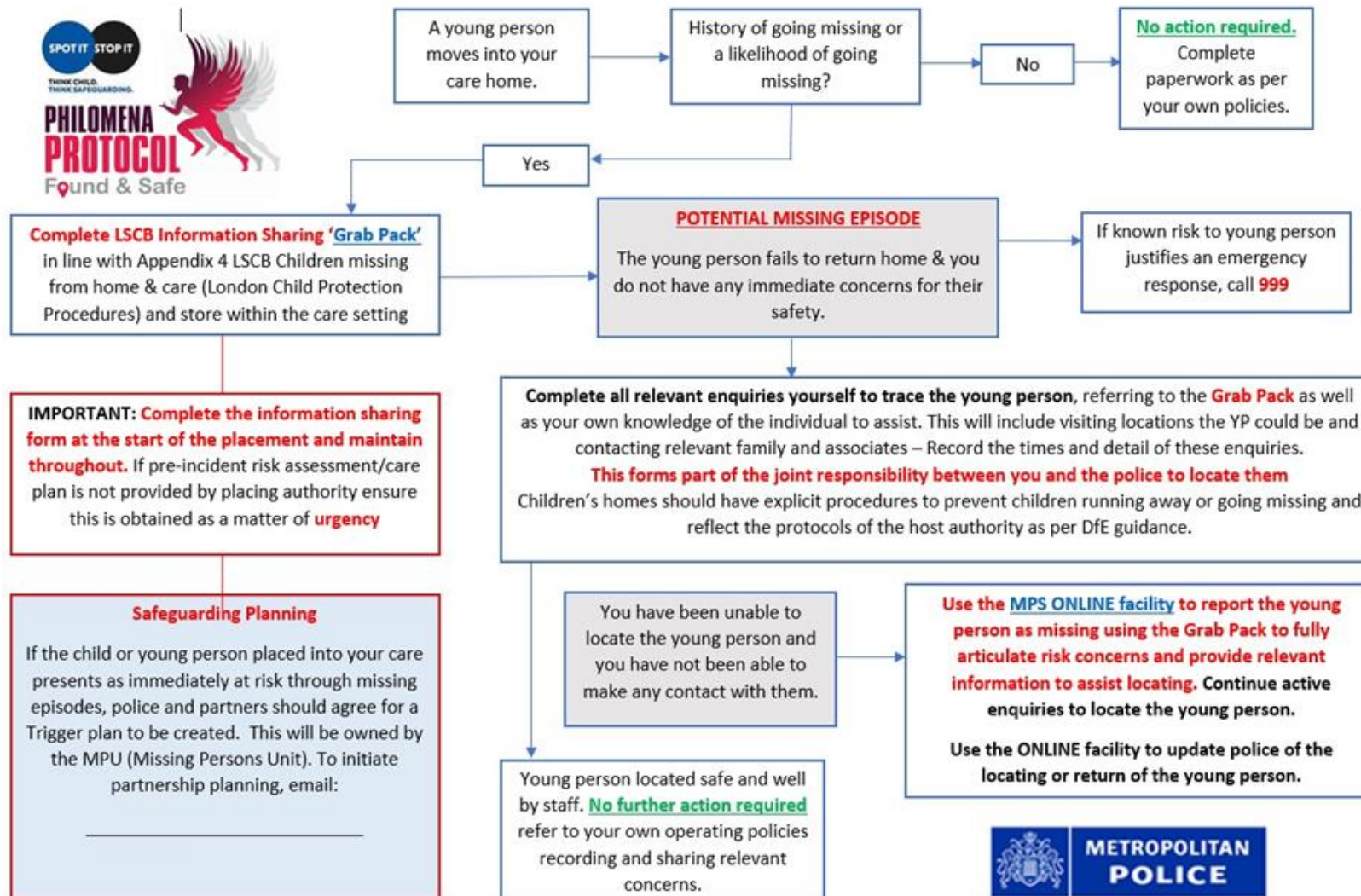
The Philomena Protocol

Ofsted's regulations with regards to registered supported accommodation require collaborative planning in compliance with the **Philomena protocol**:

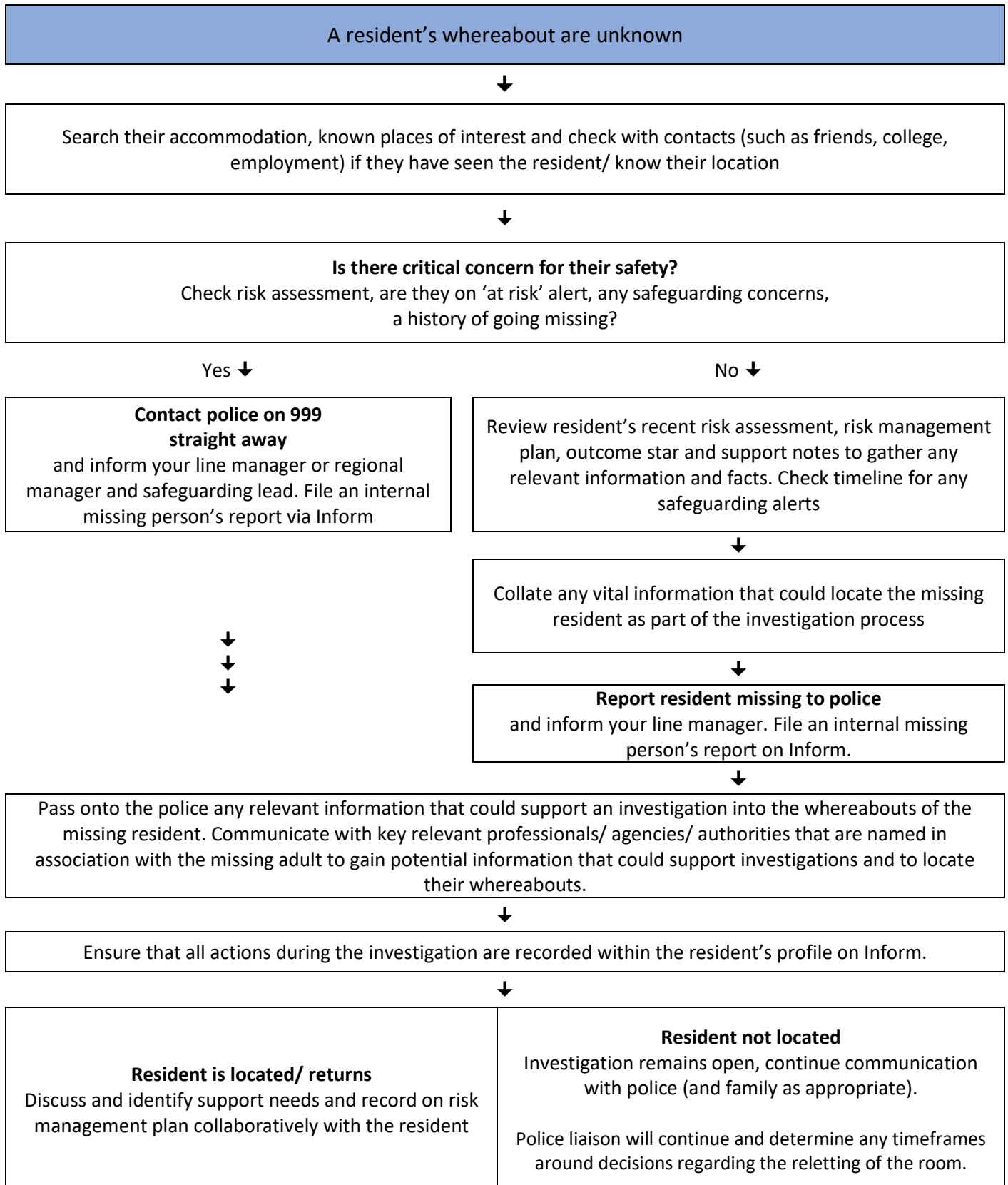
- ▶ The Philomena protocol is a process designed to improve joint planning with local authorities and to agree on responses when children placed in care go missing. Carers, staff, families, and friends are encouraged to compile useful information that could be used to help find children who are reported as missing.
- ▶ The Registered Services Manager and Site Managers must communicate and collaborate with the local / referring authority to meet the Philomena protocol, **if** the local authority adheres to the protocol.

Ofsted registered, supported accommodation services must be aware of local authority missing persons policy and procedures, and these procedures must be utilised in conjunction with YMCA St Paul's Group missing young persons and safeguarding policies and procedures, in the event that a young person goes missing.

Please see an example of a Philomena Protocol on the next page.



Missing Person Flowcharts Adult (over 18)



Missing Child of a Resident (living with or visiting)

