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## Background

In Lancashire, children go missing for a range of reasons. These children are not always open to services at the point they go missing. For many children, the [push and pull factors](#) are many and varied, and a main push factor appears to be conflict with their carers. All evidence for children who go missing suggests that the risks for those children further increase by the way of involvement in criminal activities, victims of abuse or victims of crime in respect of modern slavery and trafficking. This therefore increases the risk of children becoming dependent upon and misusing alcohol or substances. It can result in a deterioration of their physical and mental health and results in them not engaging in education or training. This can result in an overall increased vulnerability in respect of their day-to-day functioning.

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## Why it matters

This protocol is important for the safeguarding of children and families across pan-Lancashire, or those using services in the area. It should be read and must be implemented by all practitioners and managers working with children who are at risk of going missing or who are already doing so.

It is intended that this protocol will assist in developing robust responses to missing. It should be used to engage partner agencies in developing preventative services for children who are at risk of going missing. It has been written jointly by the three local authorities in Lancashire, Lancashire Constabulary, and representatives of Health services, on behalf of the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP).

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## Information

**A child** is anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**A missing person** is anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character of the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

There are two missing children risk categories:

**High risk** – the risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely.

**Medium risk** – the risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.

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The Trigger Plan & Profile (TP&P) is to set out an effective tactical response to protect and prevent children who are considered to be at risk of going missing, and where there is a significant risk of harm to the subject or the volume of times, they go missing is considered to be excessive.

The TP&P is a key document that will be used by the Local Authority, the staff in Care settings and the Constabulary should it be agreed that the child is missing.

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## Questions to consider

Does anyone pose a risk to the Child, if so, who?

Has a Child abduction Notice (S2/ S49) or Community Protection Warning/Notice ever been served?

Does the Child pose a risk to anyone, what is the risk and to whom?

What event(s) trigger the child's risks / trigger missing episodes?

If you think this is a High-risk incident why? Is the risk imminent?

Have they been observed and what happened last time they were?

Any significant Dates – Birthdays of Parents/siblings, deaths and locations linked to them etc

Significant places of interest: Trigger events?

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## What to do

All Local Authority Care Homes and care settings acting on behalf of the various Local Authorities will contact the police once they have carried out the responsibilities of parents and carers outlined in the protocol / trigger plan unless the circumstances are deemed as being High risk. Then a call on 999 should be made.

For all other levels of risk then contact with the police will be made using the 101-telephone system.

Both the 999 and the 101 system will route a call into the Force Control Room. The police will respond as per this protocol and the classification of risk that is applied to the incident.

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If you believe that a child is at critical risk or there is a critical concern, this should be reported without delay to the Police service; for emergencies use 999, or for urgent/immediate reporting 101 as well as making contact with Children's Services.

Blackburn with Darwen Council: 01254 666400 (if out of hours: 01254 587547)  
Blackpool Council: 01253 477638 or by emailing

[missingchildren@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:missingchildren@blackpool.gov.uk) (if out of hours: 01253 477600, or by emailing:

[outofhours@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:outofhours@blackpool.gov.uk))

Lancashire County Council:  
0300123 6720 (if out of hours:  
0300 123 6722)

