

# Flow Chart 4: OOA LAC Missing from Care

THIS PROCEDURE APPLIES TO ANY YOUNG PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF 18 LOOKED AFTER BY MANCHESTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES BUT PLACED OUTSIDE THE MANCHESTER BOUNDARIES. THIS INCLUDES UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC), CHILDREN/YP CLASSED AS MISSING BY THE POLICE, CHILDREN CLASSED AS ABSENT THAT FALL INTO SIX WEEKLY CASE PLANNING MEETINGS TO BE OVERSEEN AT LAC REVIEW. A CHILD/YP RE-CLASSIFIED AS MISSING AT ANY POINT THEN FALLS INTO THE MISSING FROM CARE PROCEDURE.

**Keys of reference**

|      |  |
|------|--|
| SW   | Social Worker (yellow)                     |
| MFC  | Missing from Care                          |
| HA   | Hosting Authority                          |
| EDS  | Emergency Duty Service                     |
| IRI  | Independent Return Interview               |
| YP   | Young person                               |
| CSE  | Child Sexual Exploitation                  |
| TM   | Team Manager                               |
| LM   | Locality Manager                           |
| SL   | Strategic Lead                             |
| DD   | Deputy Director                            |
| DCS  | Director of Children's Services            |
| LAC  | Looked After Children                      |
| SQAO | Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Officer |
| UASC | Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children      |
| GMP  | Greater Manchester Police                  |
| UKBA | UK Border Agency                           |

**Child/YP not found – notification to Contact Centre  
Alert to be sent to social work team inbox and  
Vulnerabilities Senior Social Worker**

SW contacts HA's Children's Services to inform them a YP placed in their area is missing. The SW or EDS complete the MFC episode on MiCARE. The SW must also inform the IRO/SQAO of the MFC episode and it must be discussed at the statutory LAC Review. If the YP is not located, the SW must contact the HA to report them as being away from their address. Reporting individual to highlight if there is CSE concern, informing HA if the media has been advised.

**The reporting individual must take proactive steps to trace the YP's whereabouts.  
Social Worker to contact carers and IRI to be offered within 72 hours of return.  
Decision to be recorded on MiCare. Referral to Children's Rights Inbox.**

If a YP is missing from care on 4 episodes in one month OR 1 episode of 24 hours or more

If child/YP is UASC or subject to immigration control, SW to:  
- notify TM  
- notify UK Border Agency

TM to notify LM, who notifies SL/DD. Decision to advise media is taken by GMP in consultation with DD who will liaise with HA's Press Officer.

**Tier 1**

TM chairs MFC strategy meeting at Placement within 48 hours of trigger episode. SW invites Police and HA relevant partners and informs SQAO. Risk Checklist/Safeguarding plan completed. An appropriate independent person would need to be identified to undertake the Return Interview. The Safe and Well check should be undertaken by GMP unless there is agreement for this to be undertaken by another appropriate person.

**Where a YP goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable for the Police to see them every time they return. In these cases, a reasonable decision should be taken in agreement between the Police and the YP's parent or carer, and their SW, with regard to the frequency of such checks. This should be considered alongside the established links between frequent missing episodes and serious harm, which could include gang involvement, forced marriage, bullying or sexual exploitation. The reason for a decision not to conduct a Safe and Well check should be recorded on the YP's case file.**

**MFC episodes not reduced:**  
SW chairs MFC Review within 4-6 weeks. Must consider if the placement is appropriate. SW must inform HA when YP has returned for every MFC episode.

**MFC episodes reduced:**  
6 weekly LAC case planning meetings chaired by SW. SW must inform HA when YP has returned for every MFC episode.

**Tier 2**

**If YP has 7 episodes of missing (not absent), OR goes missing for 7 consecutive days, SQAO chairs MFC Strategy meeting. This should be held within 7 working days of trigger episode. SW must invite TM and relevant partners from HA, (UKBA for YP who is under immigration control), Police, Health, Education. SQAO sets date for MFC Review meeting for 4-6 weeks and Police must attend.**

TM to notify LM of any further episodes of missing and any strategy meetings or strategy review meetings. LM to notify SL/DD. Escalation to DCS and Executive Member as appropriate. Ongoing consideration to be given by LM, SL / DD as to whether to advise the media. Consultation with GMP or other police force to inform decision-making process.

**Tier 3**

**IF MFC episodes continue:**  
TM to notify LM to agree further action. The LM must decide the actions required to safeguard the child. The LM will need to consider possible increased risk of criminality, CSE, alcohol and/or drug misuse. Ongoing LAC Case Planning meetings to be chaired by TM. If a UASC is missing for more than 28 days, TM will convene a review after 1 month to decide if the YP should be discharged from care, taking into consideration any issues relating to trafficking or forced marriage and child's level of vulnerability. LM must liaise and update the HA.

**If MFC episodes restart after a period of 3 months with no missing episodes, case reverts back to SW\* to chair MFC strategy meeting. \*Grade 8 SW or Team Manager.**