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| **Guidance for Missing Family Alerts**  **including**  **Pregnant Women at Risk of Absconding** |

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| **NHS Highland**  **Highland Council** |

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| **Policy Reference:** | **Date of Issue: Nov 2020** | |
| **Prepared by: Gillian Pincock** | **Date of Review** | |
| **Lead Reviewer**: | **Version: Draft** 1 | |
| **Authorised by: Highland, infants, children & young people’s clinical governance group** | **Date: Oct 2020** | |
| **Planning For Fairness: Yes/No**  **(Formerly EQIA)** | **Date:** | |
| **Distribution**  CPA’s, heads of service, CSM’s NHSH, principal officer(SW) | |  |
| Method E-mail Paper Intranet ✓ | | |

The following Abbreviations will be used in this document

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# Purpose and Scope

[The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450733.pdf) includes guidance for health professionals in response to the need for tracing missing children, families and pregnant women at risk of absconding where concerns are evident with regard to their safety and welfare.

The purpose of this guidance is to outline local procedures to be followed in situations when a family/pregnant woman have disappeared from a known location within the geographical area covered by NHS Highland and Highland Council where there are concerns of significant harm in respect of unmet need, vulnerability or abuse and child/ren are in need of protection: this includes risks to unborn babies.

This Procedure is relevant to all children resident in Highland where child protection/welfare concerns have been identified and covers all health staff and locations across NHS Highland and Highland Council.

Urgent concerns may need to be referred immediately to Social Work and Police colleagues- in line with Highland Child Protection Guidance (2020)

1. **Definition of a Missing Family**

The definition of a Missing Family/Risk of Absconding is a child/young person/family/pregnant woman, who has disappeared from a known location within a health board area for whom there may be concerns of significant harm in respect of unmet need, vulnerability or abuse. This includes risks to unborn babies.

1. **Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements**

It is the responsibility of the Custodian of the Child Protection Register to trace “missing” children/young people whose names are on the Child Protection Register.

If the “missing” child/young person is on the Child Protection Register or is ‘Looked After’ the Keeper of the Register in Highland Council **must be notified immediately**.

* 1. **What should I do?**

If a child/young person/family is suspected of being missing or a pregnant woman is at risk of absconding all reasonable and practical efforts should be undertaken by health professionals to locate the child/young person/family/pregnant woman. It is critical to speak to any extended family and neighbours, playgroups/school(s), and other significant community members that only the team around the child are likely to be aware of.

It is important that the health professional who has identified that a family/pregnant woman is missing/or has absconded, contacts and discusses the situation with the child’s Named Person - Health Visitor/Family Nurse/Headteacher and/or Named Midwife. If a Social Worker (Lead Professional) has been appointed to the Child/Young Person, it is essential that you alsoinform them.

If you are unsure who the Lead Professional is for a Child/Young Person contact your local Social Work office to obtain this information.

If you are unsure who the Named Person is for a child the Child Health department can be contacted to gain this information.

If you are unsure who the Named Person (Education) is for a school aged Child/Young Person the Child Health department can also be contacted to ascertain what school they attend and you can contact the school directly to discuss. There is a process in place for Children/Young people missing from education. Contact numbers for Child Health are in Appendix 1

**3.2 What Happens Next**

Health Professional must complete MKA1 Form (Appendix 2): this form aims to be a prompt to guide staff through the process of attempting to find the child/young person/family/pregnant woman.

**Using the MKA1 form the following checks should be completed:**

* Contact Local Child Health Department and ask for systems to be checked re current status of child
* Check with Nursery/School attended as appropriate
* Check with Social Work as appropriate
* Check with Housing as appropriate
* Check with GP practice
* Where appropriate contact the Police who have a specific role in tracing missing persons. Police have access to numerous databases which can assist in gathering information or intelligence. This can assist in tracing missing children and families.

All conversations including your rationale for discussions and any outcome/actions from discussions **must** be recorded in the Child Health Record.

If after checks the Child/young person/family/pregnant woman is/are still missing, you should contact a Child Protection Advisor (Health) to discuss next steps. Contact numbers for the Lead Nurse Child Protection and Child protection Advisors are included on Highland Child Protection Committee website [www.hcpc.scot](http://www.hcpc.scot)

Following discussion with a Child Protection Advisor (Health) where it has been agreed that a missing family alert will be progressed, you will be asked to complete either a Missing Family Alert (MFA1) form or Risk Of Absconding (ROA1) form (Appendix 3 and 4) and send it to the Lead Nurse Child Protection who will ensure Caldicott clearance to share information.

In recognition of the Data Protection Act (2018), GDPR and the general principles of the Caldicott, only pertinent information should be recorded within the MFA1/ROA1. The caseload holder for the family will retain the detailed information to further advise colleagues should the family be located.

**3.3 Review of a Missing Family/Risk of Absconding Alert**

The Lead Nurse Child Protection will undertake a review of Missing Family/Risk of Absconding Alerts issued from NHS Highland/Highland Council in discussion with the CPA (Health).

Where the Lead Nurse Child Protection deems it appropriate that the MFA1/ROA1 should be disseminated to other health boards out with NHS Highland, they will contact Information Governance/Caldicott to seek approval to share.

Following agreement by Information Governance/Caldicott for wider dissemination then CP Admin team will send to the identified health boards. (CPadmin@highland.co.uk)

**3.4 Child/Young Person/Family/Pregnant Woman Found**

Where a Health Professional is contacted and informed that the child/young person/family/pregnant woman has been found, they **must** contact a Child Protection Advisor (Health) to share this information .

The “found” section of the original MFA1 will be updated and re-circulated by CPadmin team to the original distribution list of health boards.

Highland [CPadmin@highland.gov.uk](mailto:CPadmin@highland.gov.uk) will receive all MKA1/MFA1/ROA1 forms from Health Professionals and be managed by CP admin team.

CP admin team will:

* Ensure that a delivery receipt has been sent back to referrer following receipt of any MKA1/MFA1/ROA1.
* Forward on all MFA1/ROA1 to Health Boards identified by the Lead Nurse Child Protection
* Maintain a secure database to support review of MFA1/ROA1 3 monthly

* 1. **Child/young person/pregnant woman not found**

After 3 months, where a child/young person/family/pregnant woman have not been found the Child Protection Advisor (Health) will contact the Health Professional to discuss any further actions/activities that may need to be undertaken by the Health Professional and to determine whether there is a requirement for the MFA1 to be reissued and the Child Protection Advisor (Health) will then update the Lead Nurse Child Protection, who will decide whether the MFA1/ROA1 is reissued.

1. **What should I do if I receive a Missing Family Alert/Risk of Absconding Alert**

Missing Family alerts/risk of absconding alerts will be managed within each team. A folder within a shared drive that all health staff can access is most appropriate although there may be occasions where a paper file will be kept in a secure location. Alerts from other Health Boards/Local authorities should be kept for 3 months then destroyed.

1. **What do I do if I find a child/young person/pregnant woman for whom an alert has been issued**

If you find a child/young person/pregnant woman discuss case with your line manager and if further discussion required Child Protection Advisor (Health).

Contact the professional named on the Missing Family Alert/ Risk of Absconding form.

Record all actions in the case file of the child/young person/pregnant woman.

**CHILDREN/PREGNANT WOMAN MISSING FROM KNOWN ADDRESS (MKA1)**

**Appendix 1**

This form should be completed when a Health Visitor, Family Nurse, Midwife, School Nurse or other caseload holder providing care to a child/pregnant woman becomes aware that a child/unborn child is missing from a known address and they have no forwarding information.

All reasonable and practical effort should be undertaken to locate the family. If at the end of local checks you still have no forwarding information, please contact a Child Protection Advisor (Health)

Concerns regarding unmet need, vulnerability or protection may necessitate the raising of a Missing Family (MFA1) Risk of Absconding Alert (ROA1): please include your rationale for raising a MFA/ROA within additional comments section

**Child’s Name: AKA:**

**Child’s DOB:**

**E.D.D if Unborn: Child’s sex:**

**Date Child Last Seen:**

**Child’s Last Known Address:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHECKS WITHIN THE LOCALITY** | **YES** | **NO** |
| * Contact local Child Health Department to check IT systems (01463701314) |  |  |
| * Contact Nursery/School attended (Children Missing Education Guidelines may have been initiated-Scottish Executive 2017) |  |  |
| * Check HV/SN/Midwife/GP Practice with whom registered |  |  |
| * Check with Housing as appropriate |  |  |
| * Check with Social Work as appropriate |  |  |
| * Check with family members as appropriate |  |  |
| * Check with Police Scotland as appropriate |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Additional Comments:** | | |
| **Discussion with Line Manager and Child Protection Advisor (Health):** | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signed:** |  |
| **Designation** |  |
| **Contact details** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

**NB: This form should be filed in the Child/young person/pregnant woman’s record**

**RAISING A MISSING FAMILY ALERT / RISK OF ABSCONDING**

*Where a child/young person is not on Child Protection Register or is not “Looked After Child”*

Health Professional completes **MKA1** form: child/young person/family/pregnant woman still missing. Discuss with a Child Protection Advisor

**Appendix 2**

Child Protection Advisor will provide advice on whether any further checks/actions are to be carried out by the Health Professional.

Does a Missing Family Alert require to be progressed?

YES

NO

Child Protection Advisor (Health) will discuss with Health Professional: any known or potential national destinations the family may be travelling to.

Health Professional updates Health record

Health professional to complete a Missing Family (MFA1 form) or Risk of Absconding Alert (ROA1 form) and send to Child Protection Advisor (Health)

They must place a copy of the MFA or ROA in the records held by the case holder and update chronology. GP and Health electronic systems should be updated and flagged as missing or at risk of absconding

On receipt, Child Protection Advisor (Health) will review content of MFA1/ROA1 forms

CPA (health)/Senior Nurse will inform the Lead Nurse for Child Protection who will decide whether the MFA1/ROA1 is distributed to other health boards

CPA (health) will update Health Professional raising the MFA1/ROA1:

CPA (health) will contact Health Professional every 3 months to determine whether MFA1/ROA1 requires to be sent again if family not found.

Lead Nurse Child Protection will discuss with Information Governance/Caldicott Guardian prior to wider dissemination out with NHS Highland

If a Health Professional becomes aware that CYP/Family/Pregnant woman has been found

**The Health Professional must**

Contact CPA who will update the “found” section of MFA1 and pass to Child Protection admin to re-circulate to original distribution list of health boards

Child Protection admin team will disseminate the Missing Family Alert to agreed local health boards

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**Appendix 3: missing family alert form (MFA1)**

**DATE OF ISSUE: DATE OF RE-ISSUE** (if applicable):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FAMILY NAME:** |  | **FAMILY AKA:** |  |
| **MOTHER** |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **FATHER** |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **PARTNER** |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CHILDREN’S NAMES** | | **SEX** |  | |
| **Unborn** |  |  | **E.D.D** |  |
| **1st Child** |  |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **2nd Child** |  |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **3rd Child** |  |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **4th Child** |  |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LAST KNOWN ADDRESS** |  |

**RISK FACTORS (IDENTIFY ALL KNOWN RISKS)**

**On Child Protection Register**  **Parenting Concerns  Vulnerability**

**Child Protection Order Pending  Unborn  CSE/CSA/Trafficking**

**Substance Misuse  Previous LAC  Travelling Family**

**Domestic Abuse  Refugee  Paediatric Health**

**Adult Learning Disability  Homeless  Child Mental Health**

**Adult Mental Health Issues  Learning Disability  Physical Disability**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Further details can be provided by contacting** | **NHS Highland/ HC REFERRER** |
| **NAME:**  **DESIGNATION**  **ADDRESS:**  **TEL:** | **NAME:**  **DESIGNATION**  **ADDRESS:**  **TEL:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **SHOULD YOU LOCATE THIS FAMILY, PLEASE CONTACT THE NAME OF THE REFERRER WITHIN THIS FORM** |

|  |
| --- |
| **STAFF RISKS (Detail any relevant factual information)** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **REFERRED TO POLICE AS MISSING PERSON**  **YES  NO** | **DATE REFERRED:** |

1. NHS staff in areas of identified risk will receive this MFA
2. Staff in receipt of this MFA, should make it available in a confidential area for colleagues to read.
3. NHS Staff, on receipt of the MFA, should check the family details against case files held.
4. If the family are located contact the Referrer named within this form directly – further advice can be provided by a Nurse Advisor Child Protection in your area of work.
5. Destroy the MFA1 after 3 months or Estimated Due Date plus 3 months for unborn babies or upon receipt of “Family Found” information.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FAMILY NOW FOUND** | |
| **FAMILY FOUND:**  **YES  NO** | **FOUND BY (Please indicate)**  **Police  Social Work  Health**  **Education  SAS  NHS 24**  **Practitioner Services  Other** |

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**Appendix4**

**CONFIDENTIAL - RISK OF ABSCONDING ALERT FORM (ROA1):**

**Date of Issue: Date of Re-Issue:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FAMILY NAME:** |  | | **FAMILY AKA:** |  |
| **MOTHER** |  | | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **FATHER** |  | | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **PARTNER** |  | | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **Children’s names** | | **SEX** |  | |
| **1st Child** |  |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **2nd Child** |  |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **3rd Child** |  |  | **DOB/CHI** |  |
| **4th Child** |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ESTIMATED DATE OF DELIVERY (EDD) FOR UNBORN BABY** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LAST KNOWN ADDRESS:** | |  | |
| **RISK/VULNERABILITY FACTORS (identify all known risks below)** | | | |
| On Child Protection Register | Parenting Concerns | | Child Sexual Exploitation/Abuse/trafficking |
| Child Protection Order Pending | Unborn | | Adult Prostitution/human trafficking |
| Adult Substance Misuse | Vulnerability | | Paediatric Health |
| Domestic Abuse | Refugee | | Child Physical Disability |
| Travelling Family | Homeless | | Child Previous LAC |
| Adult Mental Health Issue | Child Learning Disability | | Adult Previous LAC |
| Adult Physical Disability | Adult Learning Disability | | Child Mental Health |

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| **STAFF RISKS: (DETAIL ANY RELEVANT FACTUAL INFORMATION)** |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Further details can be provided by contacting** | **Team Lead/Professional raising alert** |
| **Other contact details (e.g. CPA )** | **NAME:**  **DESIGNATION**  **ADDRESS:**  **TEL:** |
| **Social Worker – Care and Protection team**  **Telephone Number:** |