

Inspection Top Tips – Young People going missing

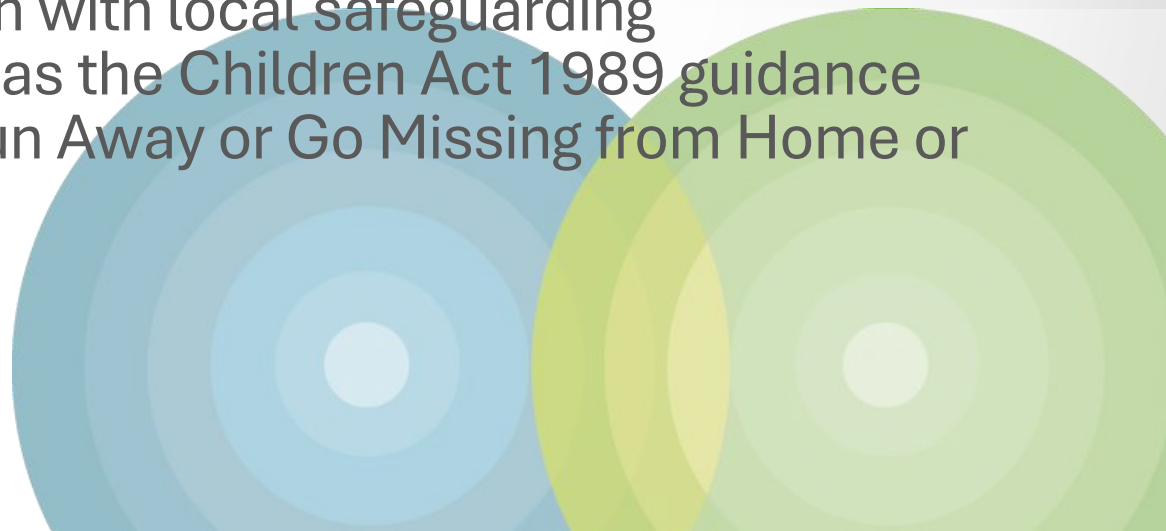
January 2025



SCIFF

The SCCIF emphasises that missing children are at significant risk of harm, including exploitation, and robust safeguarding practices are essential to reduce these risks. Homes must demonstrate a strong safeguarding culture, with staff who are well-trained, vigilant, and responsive to risks.

- **Good...** Providers must have clear, written policies and procedures for responding to children who go missing from care..
- **Outstanding...** These policies should align with local safeguarding arrangements and statutory guidance, such as the Children Act 1989 guidance and Statutory Guidance on Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care (2014).



Exemplar inspection finding

"The home demonstrates exemplary practice in responding to incidents of children going missing. Staff implement robust and highly effective protocols, tailored to each child's needs, ensuring their safety is prioritized at all times. Strong relationships with local police and other safeguarding agencies result in a coordinated and timely response to each incident. Leaders and managers are proactive in analysing patterns and trends, using this information to reduce the frequency of missing episodes. Children report feeling safe and supported, and there is evidence of exceptional efforts to engage them in understanding risks and making safer choices."

Ofsted, November 2024

Top tips...

- **Staff should take proactive steps to prevent children from going missing, including:**
 - Understanding the triggers or reasons behind the behaviour.
 - Developing individual risk assessments and safety plans.
 - Building trusting relationships with children to identify and address underlying issues.
- **Staff must act quickly and in accordance with the home's procedures. include:**
 - Searching for the child and notifying the police, if necessary.
 - Informing relevant individuals, such as parents, social workers, or other professionals.
- **When a child returns, staff must:**
 - Welcome them back and ensure they feel safe.
 - Provide appropriate care and support, including medical attention if required.
 - Facilitate an independent return home interview to understand the reasons for going missing and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

