

# Inspection Top Tips

Children at Risk of Going Missing

June 2026



# Children's Homes Regulations



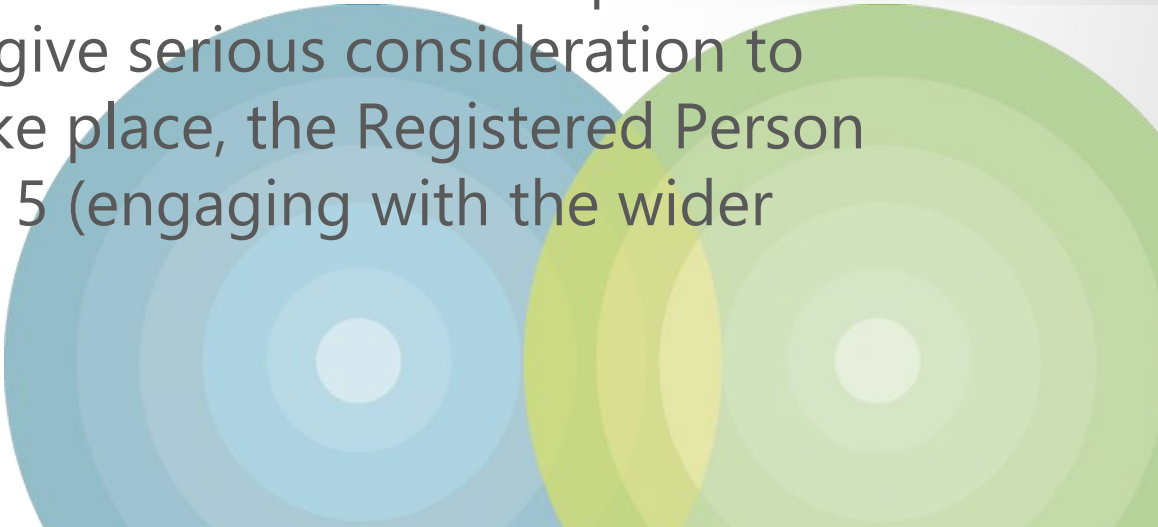
- (1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.
- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure -
- (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;



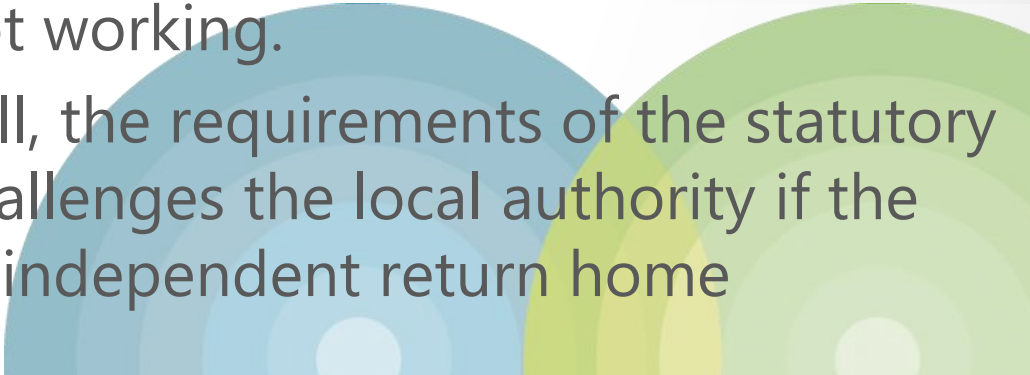
# Children's Homes Guide

**9.24** Where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children's home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. If the child is looked-after, their care plan (arranged by their placing authority) should include such a strategy.

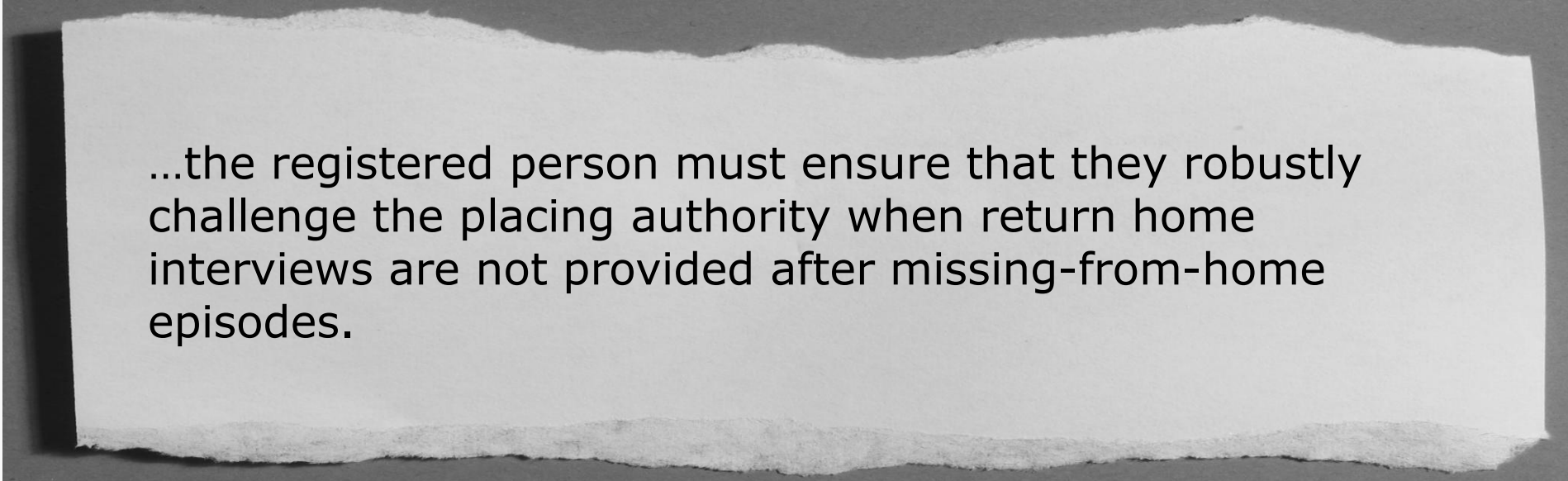
**11.12** Where the registered person considers that a child is at serious risk of harm, such as being persistently missing from their placement, they must contact the local authority to request a review of the child's care plan (regulation 14(2)(e)). Local authorities must give serious consideration to such requests.<sup>20</sup> Where a review does not take place, the Registered Person must escalate this concern under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met).



# Children's Homes SCCIF Key Elements


- Individual up-to-date risk assessments effectively address any known vulnerabilities for each child and set out what action staff should take to manage the risks.
  - Children who go missing experience well-coordinated responses that reduce actual harm or risk of harm to them.
  - There is a clear plan of urgent action in place to protect children and to reduce further harm or the risk of harm. Staff understand the risks.
  - They are proactive and effective in helping and protecting children. They revise their ways of working if their approach is not working.
  - The home is aware of, and implements in full, the requirements of the statutory guidance for children who are missing. It challenges the local authority if the local authority does not offer or arrange an independent return home interview.
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## Ofsted comment from inspection – Good but requirement made



...the registered person must ensure that they robustly challenge the placing authority when return home interviews are not provided after missing-from-home episodes.

# Top Tips...

1. **Follow the Philomena Protocol** and work with the team around the child to have an agreed plan to respond if a child goes missing that is designed to respond to their level of risk.
  2. **Be clear on the level of risk associated with the missing incident** and when raising the concern be aware of the definitions in the DfE Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care January 2014.
  3. **Always be welcoming when the child returns** and use non-judgmental language to reassure on all occasions after child has gone missing.
  4. **Be alert to any signs that may indicate the child has suffered harm or exploitation while out of the home** and escalate any concern without delay to update the agreed missing protocol for the child.
  5. **Review risk assessments, feedback from missing episodes and safety plans following each episode of missing** to develop strategies to support the child from what can be learnt.
  6. **Ensure return home interviews occur in 72 hours of the child returning** and there is the opportunity for the child to have an independent person who they can talk to and trained to carry out this service.
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# Young People Going Missing training...

One in ten young people go missing from care, usually multiple times, twenty times the average and they often experience significant harm.

To keep young people safe, agencies and professionals need to be proactive to help prevent missing episodes. Reporting them as missing to the police does not resolve the reasons or reduce the recurrence as to why they were not where they were expected to be.

Every effort should be made to prevent a young person or child from going missing in the first place and this course aims to reduce the likelihood of these events occurring, whilst equipping you with the knowledge and skills to support young people in returning should these unfortunate circumstances occur.

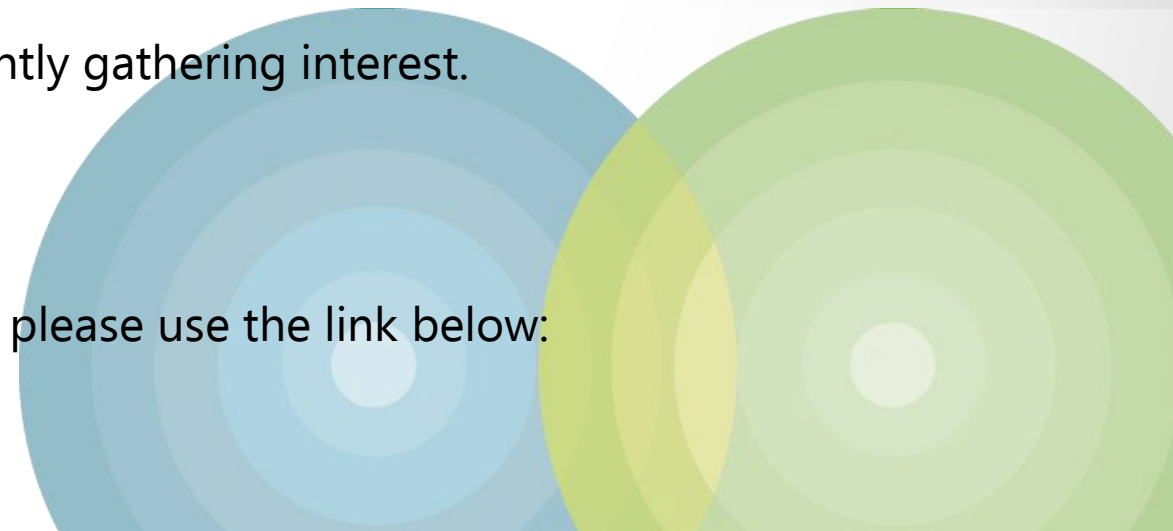
## Next dates:

This half day course is being delivered via zoom and is currently gathering interest.

Costing £82+vat (**£62+vat for members**).

For more information and to register interest for this course, please use the link below:

[Young People Going Missing - Dialogue](#)



# Behaviour to Understanding training...

Every young person in residential care carries a story. Some chapters are painful; loss, trauma, neglect, broken attachments. Other chapters hold strengths, hopes, and the potential for a different future.

This practical, engaging one-day course introduces the powerful framework of psychological formulation, a structured way to understand the “whole child” using the BioPsychoSocial model and the 5Ps (Presenting, Predisposing, Precipitating, Perpetuating, Protective).

Using the memorable metaphor of Thor from the Avengers movies (Versions A, B, C, and D), you will learn how a young person’s past shapes their present behaviour, and how you can help them build a future vision of their best self.

## Next dates:

This course is being delivered via zoom at **9:30am-3pm on 9th July 2026**

Costing £132+vat (**£99+vat for members**).

For more information and to book on to this course, please use the link below:

[Behaviour to Understanding: Formulation & Resilience in Therapeutic Care - Dialogue](#)