

Practice Note: Return Home Interview (RHI) Guidance: YPS

This should be read in conjunction with recent Guidance for Teams on completion of RHIs (March 22).

The Young People's Support team (YPS) undertake all RHIs for those children/young people who go missing but who do not have a Lead Professional. As such these children are often unknown to the authority and so the RHI process is a vital tool for safeguarding young people.

Good Practice/Tips:

- How we introduce ourselves to parents/carers is important. Often the only contact details we have are for the parent/carer and so, they will often be our first port of call. Let the parent/carer know that we intend to contact their child/young person and the reasons for this – use the initial contact to gather parental views/ information as well as best contact method for their child. We are not requesting permission to speak to their child, however, it helps to have them on board.
- Limiting options – give limited opportunity for refusal in the language used, whilst remaining polite/respectful.
- It can sometimes be overwhelming for parents for whom, missing episodes are uncommon and so, it would be good practice to frame our approach by way of support, compassion and care. Perhaps saying 'We would very much like to have a conversation with NAME to find out how they are now after going missing and whether there is any further support they might need'
- Introduce yourself as working for South Glos Council – YPS.
- Try to avoid using the words 'interview' 'RHI' or 'missing' – state '*when you were away from home*'. The word missing can evoke annoyance in young people who do not believe they were missing.
- Record information from young people in their own words – much more powerful
- Advise of need to write notes (not obvious when discussion is via phone) to ensure we have accurate notes of what young person says.
- Strategies to engage YP in process: advising them they are not in trouble, not being authoritative, open about this being a difficult discussion.
- If YP starts to discuss episode on phone do not stop them, grab the moment. However, be vigilant of hesitations/ family working together on the phone/ background noises etc.
- Parents who state that their child is unlikely to engage, acknowledge this but be clear we will speak to them and that we are skilled at engaging YP. Don't take parents word for it, always speak to YP if possible.
- Persistence – some good examples of RHIs after repeated attempts to engage YP. Indicating concerns and signposting to further support.

Consent:

In the (unusual) event of a parent refusing their child being interviewed there are a number of steps that can be taken:

1. As normal practice check police report, Mosaic (any previous missing episodes/ noted concerns), Capita. Speak to school if appropriate.

2. All workers to be consistent in how they introduce themselves to the parent/ child and the reasons for wanting to speak to the child (see above).
3. If the parents refusal is based on (what we determine is) cogent reasons e.g. their child is experiencing MH difficulties and there are no concerns noted in Mosaic/ Capita or police report that would warrant further investigation, then the staff member will contact the child's school and speak to the DSL advising of missing episode (they will already have been notified via Memorandum of Understanding: Sharing information on children who go missing May 2021) and fact that an RHI has not taken place. School can then follow this up. YPS Practice Manager will record in Mosaic that this information has been shared with schools naming the DSL it's been shared with when known.
4. RHI report should be marked as refusal from parents and management oversight/ sign off to endorse the above decision
5. We do however retain the right to override the parents' refusal if we judge that their refusal in conjunction with concerns noted in other records provides a rationale for this. The RHI process is the first step to identify possible safeguarding concerns for some young people and we must be vigilant around why the young person has gone missing (possibly due to concerns at home). We will advise the parent that we will still contact their child and make attempts to interview them, explaining our reasons for this. If we have no contact details for the child, we will endeavour to speak to their child at school. The worker will consult with their manager regarding this case, who will add oversight to the RHI report.

Information Sharing:

Refer to MOU: Information Sharing regarding young people who go missing (May 2021)

Police: Copies of completed RHI's should be shared with the police misper co-ordinator. In addition, she also needs to be notified about refusals or children we cannot reach to complete RHI's. Those we can't reach (particularly) due to wrong phone numbers will highlight the incorrect/missing information on police record and enable them to address this with officers.

The Police Misper Coordinator is now notified of all successful and non-successful RHI's via Business Support (as of January 2022). The YPS Manager will use the new 'required' notification via the clipboard function of an RHI. Business Support will then generate the PDF and sent it on to the Police. (See Mosaic Change Release December on page 6)

The current email address this information needs to be sent to is:

Kat Miller: katherine.miller@avonandsomerset.police.uk

YPS Practice Manager will record in Mosaic that this has been shared with Police.

Schools: For every relevant case, staff to confirm with young person/parent that report can be shared with school. Staff member to determine if a redacted report would be preferable (leaving out those sections not relevant but noted by young person as wanting to keep confidential).