



**St Helena
Government**

St Helena Missing from Home Multi Agency Protocol

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Introduction

We all have the responsibility to safeguard the Vulnerable

- 1.1 St Helena is continuing to build a society that enables young people to have:
- **Supportive relationships-** with parents, families and carers and access support to those at risk.
 - **Strong Outcomes-** being healthy and safe, achieving in education work and active in society.
 - **Good Opportunities-** in education, personal and social development and having a voice in society.
- 1.2 This strategy has been developed to ensure a consistent approach across all agencies in relation to those who going missing from home, placement or educational placement. It has been agreed between social care, health, police, education and other partner agencies including the third sector (NGO).
- 1.3 St Helena's strategy encompasses the need to support the most vulnerable in society inclusive of the elderly and those with a cognitive impairment resulting in increased vulnerability. The response to vulnerable adults missing within the community increases risk of serious injury or death and as such we endeavour to achieve:
- **Supportive relationships-** with families, care givers, residential and supported living providers.
 - **Strong outcomes-**being healthy and safe and achieving a positive and independent life and remaining active in society
 - **Good opportunities-** to live independently with support, be socially active, continue to have a voice in society.
- 1.4 The strategy proposes the following objectives to which all agencies, statutory or voluntary sector, should work together to collectively deliver:
- **Prevention-reducing the number of people who go missing-**through prevention strategies, education work and early intervention in cases where children and adults repeatedly go missing.
 - **Protection-reduce the risk of harm to those who go missing-**by ensuring agencies provide a tailored, risk-based response to cases of missing children, young people and adults by working effectively together to achieve a positive outcome.
 - **Provision-providing missing people and their families with support and guidance-** by referring promptly and ensuring missing people and their families understand how to access help and support. Additionally there are a number of charitable organisations in the UK that can provide some support and advice: Missing People UK, Look4them.org.uk.

1.5 To help achieve these outcomes; in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults missing or in danger of going missing, it is essential that everyone on St Helena working with children, young people and vulnerable adults continue to:

- Regularly update the Children and Adult Safeguarding Board of all safeguarding procedures and updates.
- Follow the missing from home strategy guidance from a multi-agency perspective and support families and carers to seek help and support as outlined within the strategy.
- Identify and locate children, young people and vulnerable adults who go missing and liaise with other agencies as outlined within Working Together.
- Report missing children, young people and vulnerable adults to the police and social care at the earliest opportunity.
- Raise awareness of children, young people and vulnerable adults who are missing with all involved professionals, families, and the general public.
- Protect and prevent vulnerable children and adults from going missing and contribute to the reduction of people going missing on St Helena.
- Provide effective early intervention and prevention strategies to help reduce the potential risk of vulnerable children and adults of going missing.
- Ensure all employees working with vulnerable children and adults receive safeguarding training that explains the potential vulnerability categories of missing vulnerable children and adults.

1.6 Children and adults with mental health needs, learning and physical disabilities are particularly vulnerable when missing. They may have communication difficulties and fewer opportunities to disclose reasons for going missing. All agencies should be alert to the particular needs of a disabled child or adult, making sure they know how to raise concerns and receive assistance and support.

1.7 A key principle underpinning all of our work is:

The wishes and feeling of children, young people and vulnerable adults should be sought and taken into account in reaching decisions about the provision of services which affect them. However professionals should be aware that children, young people and vulnerable adults do not always acknowledge what may be, objectively, a situation of risk, or may not feel comfortable talking honestly about problems in their lives. The particular needs or sensitivities of both genders, cultural and ethnicity or those with physical or learning disabilities should be reflected in the provision of services.

2. Missing

A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever circumstances of disappearance. He or she will be considered until located and his or her wellbeing, or otherwise is established.

2.1 The term 'children who go missing' refers to children or young people up to the age of 18 years. Any person over the age of 18 missing is reported to police as a missing adult.

2.2 Research has shown that children are more likely to go missing than adults. This may place them in risky situations and increasing their vulnerability to substance misuse, criminality and exploitation. Children, young people and vulnerable adults who run away/go missing are generally unhappy, vulnerable and may be in danger; (Missing children and Adults: Home Office 2011)

2.3. Some of the reasons for running away/going missing are:

- Problems at home-ranging from arguments with parents, carers and family members to long maltreatment.
- Family break-up where young people are drawn into their parent's conflict.
- Mental health problems
- Bullying, racism, racial harassment and homophobia
- Teenage pregnancy
- Wanting to be near friends or family, especially for those in care and where contact is infrequent.
- Grooming for sexual exploitation- evidence indicates that 90% of children subject to exploitation go missing at some point.
- Child trafficking- children, young people and vulnerable adults may go missing if they are being trafficked for the purposes of exploitation(despite no trafficking legislation on island there is legislation in relation exploitation)
- Forced marriage
- Progressive dementia increases instances of missing.
- Elderly confusion and disorientation as a result of impacted cognitive impairment through disability, illness or infection.
- Elderly confusion and disorientation as a result of recent placement moves increases the risks of missing episodes.

3. Reporting

3.1 When reporting a vulnerable child or adults missing to the police and social care, the police create an individual log with all relevant information including when the missing person was last seen, demeanour, clothing, general description and level of vulnerability (i.e. age, illness, disability, mobility). You call **999**.

3.2 If a vulnerable child or adult goes missing from a residential or supported accommodation setting they must be reported to the police and social care with immediate effect. As the care provider for a vulnerable elderly person you have a duty of care to ensure that the immediate safeguarding response is actioned in order to achieve the safe return of the missing person. Children who go missing from care are considered children of the "state" and therefore the corporate responsibility of their parents and in this case that being St Helena Government require an immediate safeguarding response.

3.3 Children who go missing subject to a child protection plan/names recorded on the child protection register are considered high risk by virtue of threshold that has been met in relation to abuse and harm. Children within this category are more likely to go missing for the reasons outlined previously. However, children subject to this level of intervention require an immediate response in order to reduce further risk of harm. Children subject to a child protection plan/ names recorded on the child protection register are known to all multi-agency partners and every effort will be made to effectively safeguard.

3.4 It is an offence for a person connected to a child under 16 years to take or send that child out of St Helena without appropriate consent. Parental abduction can be an offence. The key to police action is based upon threat to the child being 'real and imminent'.

Removal or detention of a child under 16 years by a person who does NOT have appropriate consent is an offence.

4. Child Exploitation

4.1 Child exploitation is the abuse of a child or young person by someone in a position of power or trust who involves them in inappropriate sexual activities in exchange for some form of payment such as alcohol, drugs, gifts or services. Sexual exploitation of children and young people is ABUSE. Children and young people who become involved in exploitation face huge risks to their physical, emotional and psychological health.

The most vulnerable young people often have low self-esteem, and poor self-image. Children and young people who go missing are recognised as being much more at risk of being targeted as a victim of exploitation than being sexual, criminal or enforced labour. Vulnerability is identified and targeted by abusers, whether the young person is living with their family or looked after.

The ability to capture information and concerns regarding exploitation is crucial and shapes the police response and investigation. For example, associates, common behaviours, such as social network sites, how a child may travel and where they usually frequent.

5. Children missing Education

5.1 Children and young people who are missing from education and not receiving a suitable education are at increased risk of a range of negative outcomes that could have long term damaging consequences on their life chances. They may be at increased risk of abuse and neglect. Similarly children who are the victims of abuse and neglect are more likely to go missing from education.

5.2 Children who are not in education or are missing from education are at increased risk of exploitation, harm and involvement in criminality. Children vulnerable as a result of their age and lack of maturity from an intellectual perspective and lack the ability identify risk which and harm. Children require parental/adult oversight and intervention to effectively safeguard and protect from harm and without this during missing episodes (either education or home) the risks increase.

6 Dementia Care

6.1 There is nothing more frightening or distressing than when a loved one, friend or neighbour fails to return when they should. For people living with or caring for someone who has dementia, this could be quite common, but there are things that can be done to prepare for this eventuality.

6.2 Carers and professionals supporting people with dementia can help by providing up to date information and photographs of the person, which can be kept by the St Helena police directorate in order to improve the response time in relation to recovery. The information will include usual routes taken by the individual alongside, diagnosis, communication, approaches, and descriptors.

6.3 This detail can be provided to the police as preventative approach to missing older people

7. Working together on St Helena

7.1 Key partners on St Helena, are police, social care, health, education, housing and the voluntary sectors.

7.2 All agencies and professional working with vulnerable children and adults who are missing are expected to follow this strategy and any local procedures to ensure that the correct interventions are in place to improve the response and practice and deliver better outcomes for Children and Adults.

8 How to Respond

Missing Children

Actions

Search home address
Attempt to contact
Check with friends and family
Check places frequented
Check social network
Check local hospital

Prioritise and complete Actions
Make an accurate of actions completed

Reporting

Report to the police & Social Care by calling
999 Record the provided LOG Number

Record All actions

Deployment

The police will be deployed
Social Care will support where appropriate

Return

Child found will be returned home
Child returns

Police will undertake a safe and well check
Record all information

Intervention

Return Home Interview to be completed by CSC

RHI sent to the police

Actions

All information and intel to be considered at MACE

Missing Vulnerable Adults

Actions	Search home address Attempt to contact Check with friends and family Check places frequented Check social network Check local hospital	Prioritise and complete Actions Make an accurate of actions completed
Reporting	Report to the police & Social Care by calling 999 Record the provided LOG Number	Record All actions
Deployment	The police will be deployed Social Care will support where appropriate	
Return	Person found will be returned home Person returns	Police will undertake a safe and well check Record all information

When a vulnerable older person goes missing this will inform the care and safety plan and the St Helena approach to supporting those with dementia.