



Missing Policy

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Rob Grays – Chief Executive Officer

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Introduction

Prospero Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children and Adults at Risk. This policy outlines the procedures to follow when an individual is reported as missing from home or care to ensure swift and effective action to locate the individual and protect them from harm.

Our processes are aligned with statutory guidance such as Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and 2023, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the Care Act 2014.

The safety and well-being of Children and Adults at Risk is paramount, and all individuals must act promptly when someone goes missing.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide clear guidance on how to respond if a Child or Adult at Risk goes missing.
- Minimise the risk of harm to individuals.
- Promote effective collaboration with relevant parties, including the police, clients, local authorities, and caregivers/parents/guardians.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Prospero Group employees – including permanent, temporary and contracted staff.
- Prospero Group Temporary Workers.
- Children / Adults at Risk who are:
 - Missing from home.
 - Missing from care settings.
 - Missing from any other setting where support is provided by Prospero Group employees / Temporary Workers.
- Any third parties acting on behalf of Prospero Group.
- Any individual or entity associated with Prospero Group, regardless of location.

Definitions

- **Adult at Risk** – any person aged 18 years and over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.
- **Child/Children** - any person under the age of 18.
- **Client** – an organisation, which engages with Prospero Group to purchase Work-Finding Services. This includes, amongst others: Schools, Local Authorities, Care Homes, Universities, Parents/Carers and Private Sector organisations.
- **Internal Employee** – is defined to mean a full or part-time employee of Prospero Group.
- **Missing Individual** – an individual considered missing when their whereabouts cannot be established, and their absence is out of character or raises concern for their safety.

- **Prospero Group** – is comprised of three entities: Prospero Teaching, Prospero Health & Social and Prospero Integrated.
- **Service User** – is defined to mean Child, Children or Adult at Risk.
- **Temporary Worker** – an individual receiving Work-Finding Services, delivered by Prospero Group. This includes, amongst others: Teachers, Tutors, Teaching Assistants, Care Assistants, Support Workers and Nurses.
- **Unauthorised absence** - where an individual leaves their home or care placement without permission but is not immediately considered at risk. This is distinct from being "missing."

Key Principles

Every missing incident must be treated seriously, and immediate action must be taken.

Children and Adults at Risk are particularly vulnerable to harm, including exploitation, trafficking, and abuse when missing.

Inter-agency collaboration is essential to locate and safeguard missing individuals.

Individuals must be treated with respect and sensitivity upon their return, and their views must be sought to understand the reasons for their absence.

Responsibilities

All Temporary Workers must:

- Act promptly when an individual is reported missing.
- Immediately inform the relevant parties:
 - The police (if required)
 - The Client (including DSL if required) / Local Authority / Social Worker / Emergency Duty team (if out of hours)
 - Parents/Carers/Guardians (where applicable)
 - Prospero Group

Where applicable, Parents/Carers/Guardians must:

- Discuss with the Service User the importance of staying with the Temporary Worker.
- Inform Prospero Group and/or the Client of any factors that may increase the risk of a missing incident (e.g. anxiety, recent changes in routine).
- Work collaboratively with Prospero Group to develop strategies to address missing incidents.
- Respond promptly if contacted regarding a missing incident
- Where safe so to do, attempt to locate the individual by contacting friends, family, or known associates.

Procedure When an Individual is Missing

Step 1: Immediate Action

- Attempt to contact the individual via phone or other known communication methods.
- Contact friends, family, or other individuals they may be with (if appropriate).

- Conduct a thorough search of the premises and local area (if safe to do so).
- Assess the situation using any risk assessments or known safeguarding plans to determine the level of concern.

Step 2: Reporting

- If the individual cannot be located within a reasonable time (usually one hour) or if there are immediate safety concerns, contact the police by dialling 999.
- Provide all relevant information, including their description, last known location, and any known risks or vulnerabilities. Where applicable, follow the Client / Local Authority's Philomena Protocol.
- Notify relevant parties:
 - The police (if required)
 - The Client (including DSL if required) / Local Authority / Social Worker / Emergency Duty team (if out of hours)
 - Parents / Carers / Guardians (where applicable)
 - Prospero Group

Step 3: Ongoing Actions

- Maintain regular contact with the relevant parties for updates.
- Record all actions taken and decisions made, ensuring accurate documentation.
- Keep relevant parties informed of developments.

Step 4: Their Return

- Notify the relevant parties immediately once the individual is located.
- Ensure the individual receives appropriate support and medical attention (if needed), upon their return.
- Ensure the Client / Local Authority / Social Worker conducts a return interview to understand the reasons for their absence and to address any safeguarding concerns.

Planning and Prevention Measures

Prospero Group is committed to reducing the risk of individuals going missing by:

- Providing guidance, support and online training Temporary Workers on safeguarding procedures and effective supervision techniques.
- Promoting open communication with individuals to identify and address concerns early.
- Ensuring our Temporary Workers create positive relationships with Service Users as well as a safe and supportive environment.
- Conducting regular supervisions and site visits to ensure proper supervision and care for Service User's.
- Offering an out-of-hours service to support staff and Clients.

Temporary Workers must:

- Read and understand all relevant risk assessments, care plans, safety plans and other necessary documents relating to the Service User.
- Adhere to any strategies detailed in Service User care plans/safety plans.

- Ensure constant and appropriate supervision of Service Users, particularly those identified as at higher risk of going missing.
- Encourage the Service User to remain on site (by way of early intervention), should there be suspicion that the Service User may go missing.
- Participate in regular training on how to respond to missing incidents and how to identify and address risks that could lead to individuals going missing.
- Be vigilant in identifying and securing any potential escape routes or areas where Service Users could leave the premises unnoticed.
- Following procedures – in the event of a missing episode.

Recognising Signs of Potential Missing Incidents

All individuals should be aware of the following signs that could indicate a potential missing person incident:

- Previous history of going missing.
- Changes in behaviour or mood.
- Issues at home or in the care setting.
- Associating with other young people who go missing.

Reporting and Record-Keeping

All missing incidents must be reported to:

- The police (if required, using the Local Authority's Philomena Protocol)
- The Client / Social Worker / Emergency Duty team (if out of hours)
- Parents/Carers/Guardians (where applicable)
- Prospero Group

Detailed records must be maintained, including:

- The individual's name and identifying details.
- Circumstances leading to the incident.
- Actions taken by staff, police, and other agencies.
- Outcomes of the return interview.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with data protection legislation.

Awareness, Monitoring and Review

Regular updates will be given to reflect any changes in legislation or business practices.

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required (following any significant incident) to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

Consequences

Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or Work-Finding Services.

Data Protection

Prospero Group will treat all data confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Enforcement

This policy will be enforced by Prospero Group's CEO, Managing Director, Operations Directors, Head of Compliance & Safeguarding, Head of HR and Data Protection Officer.

Appendix A – Reporting Missing Process

This flow chart should be followed in case of needing to report a child or vulnerable young person/adult missing while with a Prospero Temporary worker

