PROSPERO GROUP

Absconding Policy

Date: 28th October 2026

Review date: 28th October 2027

Approved by: Rob Grays - Chief Executive Officer

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Definitions

- **Absconding** – a situation where a Child, Adult at Risk, or other Service User leaves, attempts to leave, or is absent from an agreed location, activity, service, placement, or supervision arrangement without authorisation, or where their whereabouts become unknown.
- **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.
- **Parent/Carer or Guardian** – a person who has parental responsibility for, legal responsibility for, or provides day-to-day care and support to a child or adult at risk.
- **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.
- **Work-Finding Services** – taken to mean recruitment activity, advertising of roles and provision of work-related training, provided by Prospero Group.

Purpose and Scope

Prospero Group is committed to the safety and welfare of Children, Adults at Risk and Temporary Workers.

This policy outlines the actions to be taken where a Service User attempts to leave, or leaves, the agreed location, supervision arrangements or service without permission (absconds).

We recognise that some Service Users may have complex needs or vulnerabilities that can increase the risk of absconding behaviour. This policy aims to minimise risk, promote effective communication and support appropriate responses to absconding incidents.

Where a Client has an absconding, missing person, Philomena Protocol or equivalent procedure in place, Temporary Workers, Clients and, where applicable, Parents/Carers/Guardians must follow those procedures. Where no such procedure exists, or where additional guidance is required, this policy should be followed.

Responding to an Absconding Incident

Where a Child, Adult at Risk, or other Service User leaves a supervised area, activity, placement, or agreed location without permission, or where their whereabouts become unknown, Temporary Workers must:

- Remain calm and assess whether there is an immediate risk to the individual or others.
- Follow the Client's absconding, missing person, Philomena Protocol, or equivalent procedure.
- Notify the designated member of staff, manager, or responsible person immediately.
- Provide all relevant information, including the individual's name, description, last known location, time last seen, and any known risks, vulnerabilities, or support needs.
- Contact emergency services where required by the Client's procedures, or where there is an immediate risk to the individual's safety, welfare, or wellbeing.
- Record all actions taken, communications made, and information received.
- Notify Prospero Group as soon as reasonably practicable.

- Cooperate with any subsequent investigation, welfare review, safeguarding enquiry, or incident management process.

Individual's must not place themselves or others at risk when attempting to locate, follow, or recover an individual who has absconded.

Reporting Concerns

Prospero Group encourages the prompt reporting of any concerns relating to absconding risks, attempted absconding incidents, absconding incidents, or failures to follow this policy.

Any Client, Temporary Worker, Service User, Parent, Carer or Guardian who believes this policy has been breached should raise their concern in accordance with Prospero Group's Complaints Policy.

Temporary Workers must report concerns in accordance with the Client's absconding, missing person or equivalent procedures and notify Prospero Group as soon as reasonably practicable.

Parents, Carers and Guardians should report concerns to the Client and/or Prospero Group at the earliest opportunity.

Clients should notify Prospero Group of any significant absconding incidents involving a Service User receiving services through Prospero Group, and of any concerns regarding a Temporary Worker's compliance with relevant procedures.

Where there is an immediate risk to the safety or welfare of a Service User or another person, emergency services should be contacted without delay in accordance with the Client's procedures and relevant safeguarding guidance.

All concerns and incidents reported to Prospero Group will be recorded and managed in accordance with relevant safeguarding, data protection and complaints procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Prospero Group will:

- Provide guidance and training relating to safeguarding and absconding risks.
- Support the sharing of relevant information between Temporary Workers, Clients and Parents/Carers/Guardians where appropriate.
- Establish clear communication arrangements for reporting absconding incidents.
- Maintain records of absconding incidents reported to Prospero Group.
- Provide support and guidance following an absconding incident.
- Cooperate with Clients, Parents/Carers/Guardians and relevant authorities where required.

Temporary Workers must:

- Familiarise themselves with and follow the Client's absconding, missing person, Philomena Protocol or equivalent procedures where these exist. Where applicable, Temporary Workers must also comply with the Prospero Group Missing Person Policy and any associated reporting requirements.
- Follow this policy where no Client procedure exists or where additional guidance is required.
- Record attendance and supervision arrangements in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.
- Undertake ongoing dynamic risk assessments and take reasonable steps to reduce identified risks.
- Immediately report any attempted or actual absconding incident in accordance with the Client's procedures and to Prospero Group.
- Contact emergency services where there is an immediate risk to the safety or welfare of a Service User or others.
- Maintain accurate records of incidents, actions taken and communications made.

- Cooperate with investigations and reviews following an absconding incident.

Service Users must:

- Follow any reasonable instructions designed to keep themselves and others safe.
- Inform the Temporary Worker or relevant responsible adult before leaving a supervised area, where they are able to do so.
- Engage with agreed safety plans and expectations, where applicable.

Parents, Carers and Guardians must:

- Provide relevant information that may assist in identifying or managing absconding risks.
- Inform Prospero Group and/or the Client of any known factors that may increase the likelihood of absconding behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with Prospero Group, the Client and other relevant professionals to reduce identified risks.
- Respond promptly to communications relating to an absconding incident.
- Cooperate with safeguarding and welfare arrangements designed to protect the Service User.

Clients must:

- Have appropriate absconding, missing person, Philomena Protocol or equivalent procedures in place where required.
- Ensure Temporary Workers are made aware of any relevant procedures, risk assessments, care plans or safety plans.
- Share relevant information regarding known absconding risks, triggers, preventative measures, risk assessments and support plans.
- Ensure Temporary Workers are aware of who to contact and what actions are required in the event of an absconding incident.
- Lead or support incident management in accordance with their own procedures and statutory responsibilities.
- Notify Prospero Group of significant absconding incidents involving a Temporary Worker or Service User.
- Work collaboratively with Prospero Group, Parents/Carers/Guardians and relevant authorities following an absconding incident.

Risk Assessments

Where absconding risks are known or identified, Clients, Parents/Carers/Guardians, Prospero Group and Temporary Workers should work collaboratively to ensure appropriate risk information, control measures and support arrangements are communicated and implemented.

Safeguarding Procedures

Prospero Group will follow established safeguarding procedures in accordance with local and national guidance. Where safeguarding concerns are identified, this may include sharing information with or contacting the police, social services or other relevant authorities, as appropriate.

Absconding incidents involving a Child, Adult at Risk, or other Service User may constitute a safeguarding concern and will be managed in accordance with Prospero Group's Safeguarding Policy and relevant statutory guidance.

Data Protection

Prospero Group is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of personal data. All personal data processed under this policy will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and Prospero Group's data protection policies and procedures.

Enforcement

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

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in appropriate action being taken. For Temporary Workers, this may include the suspension or termination of Work-Finding Services and referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or relevant professional body, where applicable. Prospero Group also reserves the right to suspend or terminate its relationship with any Client where safeguarding concerns, breaches of this policy, or actions that place Service Users at risk are identified.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, government guidance and best practice.