

## **15 Children and families who go missing**

- 15.1 Children on the Child Protection register who go missing
- 15.2 Children for whom there are other outstanding child protection concerns

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### **15.1 Children on the Child Protection register who go missing**

When the keyworker becomes aware that the whereabouts of a child on the Register are unknown, the relevant social services team manager and the Register Custodian must be informed immediately.

The keyworker should make enquiries initially via the core group to locate the child. Contact may be made with relatives, neighbours and any other known contacts of the family. If local enquiries are not successful, the core group should come to a view about the level of the child's vulnerability and the steps that should be taken to locate the child. The health visitor and school nurse should use their own procedures to attempt to locate the child; and the keyworker should contact the Family Health Service Association, the Department of Social Security, the Education Department, the Housing Department and the police. The Department of Social Security should check its own local records and, if this proves unsuccessful, the Child Benefit Centre. Contact with the Child Benefit Centre should only be made by the local social security office (DHSS Circular LASSL (80) 4: 'Child Abuse Central Register Systems' describes these arrangements).

If there is a possibility that the child may be removed from the UK, the police may issue an 'All Ports Warning' in an effort to locate the child before s/he leaves the country (under the Child Abduction Act 1984). Such warnings will only be issued if the concerns have been acted on promptly. Local authority solicitors may be able to assist with this process.

The Register Custodian should consider writing to inform all other Register Custodians to be alert for the child arriving in their area.

A record of information received about registered children who go missing from other areas is kept by the Register Custodian. This record is checked when an enquiry is made of the Register.

### **15.2 Children for whom there are other outstanding child protection concerns**

Particular consideration needs to be given to appropriate legal interventions where it appears that a child for whom there are outstanding child protection concerns may be removed from the UK by his/her family in order to evade the involvement of agencies which have a responsibility to safeguard the child. These legal interventions may include a Prohibited Steps order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, or invoking the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court.

Where there are concerns about an expected child, local hospital and community midwifery services should be informed, in addition to midwifery services in any area where the family has connections.