



Westmorland and Furness
Safeguarding Children
Partnership



Missing Child?



Step 1: Make Reasonable Enquiries

Before reporting a child missing, take reasonable steps to establish their whereabouts.

- Contact the child directly using any known phone numbers or communication methods.
- Contact parents, carers or those with parental responsibility.
- Ask whether parents or carers can account for the child's whereabouts.
- Check whether location-sharing apps or trackers are available.
- Contact known friends, peers or associates who may know where the child is.
- Check known locations the child regularly visits.
- If a likely location is known and it is safe to do so, make enquiries to confirm whether they are there.

Step 2: Can you confirm they are safe?

Ask yourself:

- Do I know where the child is?
- Has their location been confirmed?
- Have I spoken to them directly?
- Am I confident they are safe and well?
- Can the parent, carer or another responsible adult account for them?

If the answer is NO and you remain concerned about their whereabouts or safety, report them missing.

Step 3: Report them Missing

Call 101 - Report the child missing if, after completing reasonable enquiries, you cannot locate them and do not know where they are.

Call 999 immediately if:

- There is an imminent risk of harm.
- Information suggests they may be at immediate risk.

Do not delay reporting because you are still trying to locate them.

What to expect after reporting

Once a missing report is made, police may:

- Ask for a description of the child and what they were last seen wearing.
- Ask where and when they were last seen.
- Discuss any concerns regarding their safety and wellbeing.
- Gather information about places they may visit or people they may be with.
- Conduct enquiries to locate them as quickly as possible.
- Visit the child's home or placement to gather information that may assist in locating them.

If the child returns or is located before police find them, police should be informed immediately.

When the child returns

Return Home Interview: A child who has been missing will be offered a Return Home Interview. This provides an opportunity to:

- Understand why they went missing.
- Identify any risks they may have experienced.
- Explore any support needs.
- Help prevent future missing episodes.

The purpose is to improve safety, wellbeing and support planning.

If you do not know where a child is and cannot confirm they are safe, report them missing. 101 / Emergency 999