

# Philomena Protocol – Briefing Note



**Launch: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

Warwickshire is implementing the Philomena Protocol into local practice for responding to children and young people going missing, or deemed likely to go missing, from care placements.

The Protocol originated in Durham in 2018 and is now being rolled out across other parts of the country following its success. It is an initiative to help locate and safely return children and young people in care as quickly as possible when they are missing. The basis of the scheme is for vital information about the young person to be recorded, which can be used to locate them safely and quickly and to prevent ongoing reoccurrences.

The benefits are listed as saving time and resources but most importantly the potential to improve safeguarding of our vulnerable young people by locating them quicker. It involves working with children's homes/carers to establish patterns of behaviour and people and places they frequently visit.

The Protocol puts emphasis on carers (residential care home staff, supported accommodation staff and foster carers), working alongside allocated workers in Children & Families, Warwickshire County Council (WCC), to identify where a child or young person in their care is likely to go missing and complete the protocol forms with the information compiled. This information is then securely retained, and should a missing episode occur utilised by the carer to make reasonable efforts to locate them. In the event these initial enquiries are unsuccessful, the form is to be updated with specific details about the episode and emailed or handed to the Police to enable a more efficient missing enquiry.

**The forms to be completed are enclosed at Appendix A.** They should be regularly updated with new information about description, friends, associates, locations frequented, phone numbers and identifiers to maximise the opportunity for the young person to be found swiftly and safely. The forms are to be transferred between carers by the allocated social worker when new placements are made.

**A flowchart outlining the process in detail is enclosed at Appendix B.** This details specific actions to be conducted by carers, WCC staff and Police upon identification of a child or young person in care likely to go missing and in response to any subsequent missing event.

From 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 the Protocol will be applied to 15 identified children and young people to test and embed the process and assess the impact.

The Protocol will be applied to all children in care placements from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021. We are including:

- Warwickshire children in care placed in Warwickshire
- Warwickshire children in care placed out of county
- Other local authority children placed in Warwickshire

Any queries about the Protocol can be directed as follows;

Police: [missing@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:missing@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk)

Children & Families, WCC: [cemissing@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cemissing@warwickshire.gov.uk)

**Philomena Task & Finish Group**

**February 2021**