<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author:</th>
<th>NHSL Child Protection Professional Lead</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Lead Executive Director:</td>
<td>Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endorsing Body:</td>
<td>NHS Lanarkshire Public Protection Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance or Assurance Committee:</td>
<td>Healthcare Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee</td>
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<td>Implementation Date:</td>
<td>August 2004</td>
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<td>Version Number:</td>
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<td>Review Date:</td>
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<td>Responsible Person:</td>
<td>NHSL Head of Public Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Child Protection Advisors</td>
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<td>➢ Lead Professional for Child Protection</td>
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<td><strong>Consultation Process / Stakeholders:</strong></td>
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<td>➢ NHS Lanarkshire Lead Child Protection Paediatrician</td>
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ii) Change Record

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<td>August 2004</td>
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

NHS Lanarkshire (NHSL) has developed a suite of Child Protection Policies that will support staff awareness and understanding of their responsibilities towards the care and protection of children and young people. This policy will support and guide NHSL staff in determining the most appropriate action to take in a situation where a child/young person/unborn child is “unseen” or “missing”.

**Definition of a missing family**

“This is a family who has disappeared from a known location within a Health Board area for whom there may be concerns of significant harm for the child or young person in respect of unmet need vulnerability or abuse. This includes risks to unborn children” (Scottish Government 2013).

2. **AIM, PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES**

2.1 This policy aims to inform NHSL staff who may within their role be involved in raising a missing family (MFA1). The policy also considers what appropriate action NHSL staff should take when there is assessment of ‘risk of flight’ for a pregnant woman.

3. **SCOPE**

3.1 **Who is the Policy intended to Benefit or Affect?**

- NHSL Employees
- Service Users
- Partner Agencies

3.2 **Who are the Stakeholders?**

- NHSL Employees
- Service Users
- Partner Agencies

4. **PRINCIPAL CONTENT**

4.1 **Unseen Child/Young Person/Unborn Child**

An unseen child/young person/unborn child may result from the following:

- NHSL staff cannot gain access to the child/young person/pregnant woman/family
Access is gained to the home but the child/young person/pregnant woman is not physically seen
Access is specifically denied
There is a pattern of a child/young person/ante-natal mother not attending for health appointments and/or not being seen by any other professional, including the GP
Parent/carer may make excuses for NHSL staff not to see the child/young person/pregnant woman/family
Refusal of the service
Address unknown
Mobile or travelling families
Disguised compliance

NB: The above factors are useful in drawing a professional’s attention to a possible cause for concern and need to be considered within an overall assessment of risk. This list is not exhaustive.

5. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Any NHSL staff involved with a child/young person/pregnant woman (unborn child) where there is a pattern of non attendance for health appointments or they cannot gain access to the home to see the child/young person/family should:

- Review relevant health records / electronic systems and inform the Named Person and other key professionals (Police / Social Work), as appropriate to establish if there is any information that would suggest increased vulnerability / risk.
- Persist in their efforts to make contact until satisfied that there is not a risk of Significant harm.
- Check GP registration and last attendance, noting any concerns
- Contact your Line Manager or Child Protection Advisor/ Child Protection Lead Nurse for further advice if required.
- Consider if this meets the criteria for a Missing Family.

Prior to raising a Missing Family Alert (MFA), discuss with Child Protection Advisor/Child Protection Lead Nurse who will agree the appropriateness of raising a NHS Scotland Missing Family Alert Form (MFA1).

The demographic detail, concerns and action taken to locate the family should be detailed on the MFA 1 form. This form can be accessed via Firstport. Please refer to:
Guidance for Health Professionals Responding to Missing Families & Unborn Babies for whom there are Concerns (NHS Scotland 2014). The completed form should be emailed to the NHSL Child Protection Team at:

Lan-UHB.ClinicalChildprotection@nhs.net

A copy of the completed MFA 1 form should be filed in the child/young person/pregnant woman’s record/electronic record and a corresponding entry made within the chronology.

When a Missing Family Alert has been raised, the NHSL employee must retain the child health record/adult record for a minimum period of 3 months and during this time every effort to locate the family should continue. This includes discussion with:

- Family GP/other Health Professionals – MFA information should be added to GP ‘Special Notes’ which will ensure information is available to NHS 24 should the family contact this service.
- Other agencies as appropriate.
- Known family members.
- Robust Interrogation of relevant IT systems such as Community Health Index (CHI) and Standard Immunisation Recall (SIRS).

If the child/young person/pregnant woman/family is located, the Child Health Record/Adult Record must be either retained if appropriate or transferred following liaison with the receiving Health Professional.

If the child/young person/pregnant woman/family has not been located within 3 months discussion should take place with Child Protection Advisor/Head of Service, Public Protection to consider re-issuing the Missing Family Alert (MFA).

Risk of Flight for Pregnant Women

Please note the MFA 1 form should also be completed when there is assessment of ‘risk of flight’ for a pregnant woman.

The Head of Public Protection has delegated responsibility from the Caldicott Guardian to raise and disseminate all MFAs.
Data Protection

“NHS Lanarkshire take care to ensure your personal information is only accessible to authorised people. Our staff have a legal and contractual duty to keep personal health information secure, and confidential. In order to find out more about current data protection legislation and how we process your information, please visit the Data Protection Notice on our website at www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk or ask a member of staff for a copy of our Data Protection Notice.”

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

In order to carry out their duties, NHSL staff should be supported in relation to an unseen child/young person/ unborn child when risks have been identified.

7. COMMUNICATION PLAN

- NHS Lanarkshire Policies within FirstPort
- National and Local Child Protection Policies within FirstPort
- Briefings to NHSL Employees via managers and staff briefings

8. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in August 2022 and then at least every 3 years or as required.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy meets NHS Lanarkshire’s EDIA

10. REFERENCES

- Child Protection Guidance for Health Professionals (2013)
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Getting it Right for Every Child - Practice Guide (2014)
- Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures; West of Scotland Child Protection Consortium (2016)
- Guidance for Health Professionals Responding to Missing Families & Unborn Babies for whom there are Concerns (NHS Scotland, 2014)