



Philomena Protocol

Found & Safe





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

What is the Philomena Protocol?

- The Philomena Protocol is a scheme that asks carers to identify children and young people who are at risk of going missing, and to record vital information about them that can be used to help find them quickly and safely.
- The carer adds details about the young person to the Philomena Protocol form, including:
 - a physical description,
 - who their friends are,
 - a recent photograph,
 - whether they've gone missing before.

[Click here to access
the protocol
documents via
Bedfordshire Police
website](#)





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Benefits of the Philomena Protocol include:

- Safeguards each young person or child in care or supported accommodation.
- Manages risk appropriately in accordance with the needs of the young person or child.
- Minimises missing episodes of young people and children.
- Minimises unnecessary involvement of police and stigmatising young people and children.
- Manages and reduces demand and supports a more effective partner agency service overall.
- Develops understanding of the joint responsibility held by care givers and police.
- Ensures that our joint response is sustainable and that emerging best practice is identified and appropriately developed.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Joint responsibility:

- Reporting a young person or child missing to police does not reduce or remove the ongoing professional/corporate parenting role of carers.
- The expectation is that carers will respond with the same level of care and concern for a missing young person or child as any good parent.
- Police will fulfil an investigative and safeguarding role for all young people and children reported missing, when necessary, but in turn will expect relevant and appropriate support from carers prior to, and for the duration of, any reported incident; as well as ongoing preventative measures for such incidents.
- You can expect police to support staff and carers with advice and training (where necessary), while also to be challenged if the expected responsibilities are not undertaken. This may mean reporting to Ofsted.
- Once the Philomena Protocol is in place, managers and agencies overseeing care homes and placements should ensure that their internal missing policies reflect the joint responsibility expectations in the best interests of risk management and sustainable reporting behaviour. It is vital that all staff and carers, in daytime or night-time roles are suitably trained to meet these expectations and fulfil their responsibilities.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

When to fill in the form; Part's 1 to 4:

- If you're concerned that a young person or child might go missing, fill in part's 1 to 4 of the form as soon as possible. Please make sure you review the details and keep them up to date. **Utilise the locations and contacts form to list associates and locations known.*
- Usually, it would be the young person/child's social worker that would complete parts 1 to 4 of the form, however, the form can also be completed, when necessary, by the child/young person's carer or jointly. This should take place with the young person/child at the earliest opportunity when they are identified as a risk of going missing.
- It is the responsibility of both the social worker and young person/child's carer/placement to make sure the Philomena Protocol is in place when they are concerned a young person/child may go missing. There should not be a delay in completing the form if the social worker is not available and the carer should take responsibility.
- The form will be reviewed monthly by the carers at the young person/ child's placement; the dedicated social worker should ensure this is taking place and assist when necessary. *This is to ensure the most up to date information and photograph are available.*
- The dedicated police point of contact from the missing team, may ask to see the Philomena Protocol form for a young person/child when they conduct their visits to the placement.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

When to complete Part's 5 & 6

- Part's 5 & 6 of the form should be completed if the young person/child goes missing.
- Part's 5 & 6 include actions that should be considered to be undertaken to locate the child/young person prior to calling the police and captures details such as what the young person/child was wearing at the time and where they were last seen.
- You must inform the police control room what actions you have taken and the outcomes; these will be recorded on the police incident log (also known as the CAD).
- Where there is a real, immediate risk of the child **suffering significant harm** the carer **should not delay** contacting the police and would not be expected to complete Parts 5 & 6 before calling.
- Except in an emergency the carer should have completed Part's 5 & 6 so they can provide details of these to the Police.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

When should the form be given to the police?

- The police only need to see the completed form if the child or young person is reported as missing.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Where can I find the form?

- A copy of the form is available on the Bedfordshire police Internet page – please search for Philomena protocol.
- **Once complete, the form is owned by the care provider and/or local authority.**





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Where Should the form be kept?

- The form should be stored securely on your computer system where you, or any other carer, can find it quickly day or night. You should also regularly back up the form, ideally using password protected online storage so you're not relying on an individual computer.
- ***It is the responsibility of the person/agency completing and the recipient to protect the information from theft and compromise. The form and the information contained in it must be securely stored.***





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

What if a young person goes missing?

- If you discover the person's gone missing, you should try to find them immediately. If you can't, call [101](#) and tell the call handler that you have a Philomena Protocol form.
- If it's an emergency and the young person is in danger, phone [999](#) now.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

ACTION PLAN to be implemented before calling the Police:

- **THE POLICE SHOULD NOT BE THE 1ST ACTION ON THE LIST UNLESS;**
- The child or young person is in an unsafe situation and there is a real, immediate risk that the child may suffer significant harm.

Antecedent behavior, trigger incidents, out of character behavior and post-incident behavior may inform risk and should be considered.

- There is a bespoke (aka Trigger plan), in place for the young person or child, that stipulates police must be notified immediately.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

ACTION PLAN to be implemented before calling the Police:

- If you discover the child, or young person has gone missing, you should take reasonable steps to try and find them. Actions that should be completed by the person reporting may include:
 - 1) Attempt to make contact by telephone/text and social media.
 - 2) Search the place the child was expected to be and the place they were last seen.
 - 3) Contact the child's family and/or friends.
 - 4) Visit locations and addresses the child is likely to be (if safe to do so).
 - 5) Allow the child or young person a reasonable period to return of their own accord.
- This should not be considered a check list what are reasonable actions will depend on risk and level of urgency to seek police assistance.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Next steps:

- If you are still unable to locate them following these enquires, you should then call [101](tel:101) to report them missing.
- A copy of the Philomena Protocol form must be made available to the attending officer and can be emailed into the Beds Police Force Control room; force.control@beds.police.uk.
- The carer must be able to provide updates to the police for the considerations in Part's 5 & 6.
- If it's an emergency and the young person is in danger, phone [999](tel:999) immediately.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

If the child / young person's whereabouts are known they are NOT Missing;

- The young person is absent from home without permission and the Police do not need to be notified unless there is a genuine “concern for welfare”.
- It is the responsibility of the carer/s to return/transport the young person NOT the police.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

If a young person leaves your care:

- The Philomena Protocol is used in many areas nationally, so please transfer the form to the new carer, who will be responsible for keeping it safe and up to date. Similarly, if a young person transfers to your care from another area, check whether they have an existing Philomena Protocol in place that you would now be responsible for.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Force Control Room Responsibilities:

There is an expectation that all Looked After Children and Young People who are known to be at risk of going missing will have a Philomena Protocol document held by their care provision (care home/supported accommodation/foster placement).

- Call handlers should ask the informant if a Philomena Protocol document is available for the child/young person. If there is one advise that a copy should be provided to police and sent direct by email into the Beds police FCR (force control room); force.control@beds.police.uk.
- The FCR then have responsibility to forward the completed form to the attending officer and CMIT (Police Missing team). The FCR should then delete the form from their systems.
- *Remind the informant that they must consider the actions in Parts 5 & 6 of the form which will document the suggested reasonable lines of enquiries and updates the police will need , prior to contacting the police (unless there is a need for an immediate police response). These will be recorded on the incident log (CAD).*





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Attending Officer Responsibilities:

- There is an expectation that all Looked After Children and Young People who are known to be at risk of going missing will have a Philomena Protocol document held by their care provision (care home/supported accommodation/foster placement). Attending officers should ensure a copy has been sent to the FCR (force control room), this will help the officer in understanding risk and identifying fast track actions.
- When an investigation is passed to CMIT (police missing investigation team), the Philomena Protocol document should be provided as part of the handover process, should the person be located prior to CMIT taking on ownership then the Philomena Protocol should be securely disposed of. It must be remembered that this document contains sensitive personal data so should be stored securely at all times and disposed of when the missing episode is concluded.





Bedfordshire Police

Compassionate | Courageous | Inclusive | Professional | Proud

Police intervention

- Where there is a real, immediate risk of the young person or child suffering significant harm, the carer should contact the police immediately.
- The carer should also contact the police if they have been unable to find the young person or child after conducting reasonable actions to locate the child and after allowing the child reasonable opportunity to return of their own accord.

