



CHILDREN WITH FAMILIES WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN

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1.1 Local agencies and professionals should bear in mind, when working with children and families where there are outstanding concerns about the children's safety and welfare (including where the concerns are about an unborn child who may be at future risk of significant harm), that a series of missed appointments may indicate that the family has moved out of the area or overseas. Children's social care and the police should be informed as soon as such concerns arise. In the case of children taken overseas it may be appropriate to contact the Consular Directorate at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office²⁵⁹, which offers assistance to British nationals in distress overseas. They may be able to follow up a case through their consular post(s) in the country concerned.

1.2 Particular consideration needs to be given to appropriate legal interventions where it appears that a child for whom there are outstanding concerns about their safety and welfare may be removed from the UK by his/her family in order to evade the involvement of agencies with safeguarding responsibilities. Particular consideration should also be given to appropriate legal interventions when a child who is subject to a care order has been removed from the UK. Children's social care, the police Child Abuse Investigation Unit and the Child Abduction Section at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office should be informed immediately.