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recognise that care experienced young people should be listened to and supported to prevent them being unnecessarily criminalised and from being exposed to risk and harm. Some children may be 'not at home' for a short period of time before returning. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose or accidentally, and may be testing boundaries. This kind of boundary testing is well within the range of normal teenage behaviour and is not necessarily considered a risk. Police Scotland receive a number of calls relating to missing persons, often relating to care experienced young people who have not returned home, however their whereabouts are known by their care provider and they are believed to be safe and well.

The Not At Home Protocol has the following aims:

- To meet the needs of our care experienced children and young persons
- To ensure a proportionate and risk assessed response to missing episodes
- To reduce the likelihood of escalation of behaviour with unnecessary police contact

Where there are good grounds to believe that a child's absence is careless or deliberate, and there is no apparent risk to the child and/or public it is permissible to have a single agency response and there is no need for the police to be contacted. If that risk becomes intolerable to the carer, consideration should be given to reporting the child missing to Police Scotland, generating a multi agency response.

Local Authorities, care providers and Police all play a vital role in the prevention, response, support and protection of children when they are missing. It is recognised that looked after children who go missing from care homes are particularly vulnerable as they can be targeted and may lack direct support or supervision from close family members.

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Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) is an innovative way of supporting people in ntg a 3064 455.5int t BPol33(p)-7(e) can

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