

PRACTITIONER GUIDE

Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN)

This guide has been produced in collaboration with Hampshire Constabulary to provide a basic introduction to Child Abduction Warning Notices to support multi-agency professionals understanding.

What is a CAWN?

A Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) warns an individual that they have no permission to associate, contact or communicate with a child, and that if they continue to do so, then they may be arrested and prosecuted.

A CAWN becomes a valuable safeguarding tool when dealing with individuals who:

- allow or target young people to stay at their homes, or
- take them to other locations without informing their parent or responsible carer.

CAWN's are a preventive tool and breach of them is not a criminal offence. They can be the first stage in a potential prosecution for child abduction offences.

The aim of a CAWN is to:

- Reduce repeat incidences of children being missing from the care of those responsible for their welfare.
- Reduce risk that such children are being exposed to.
- Set out a clear, graduated and proportionate response to such cases.

When can a CAWN be issued?

A CAWN can be issued to an individual if:

- A child under the age of 16 years (or under 18 years, if subject to an interim or full care order) is reported missing and is found on two or more occasions to be in their company.

OR

- Is the subject of reports that suggest the child's association with a suspect is giving significant cause for concern.

CAWNs can be considered on the first occasion a child is found at any particular location if, following a multi-agency risk assessment, it is considered proportionate and appropriate.

Multi-agency involvement

Prior to applying for a CAWN, Police need to carefully consider if this is the best option.

The police will want to speak to the child, their family and any relevant professionals who support them, before a decision is made. If Children's Services are working with the child, the police will consult them in every case.

Upon issuing a CAWN, the police will work with those around the child to action plan and monitor the effect of the CAWN on both perpetrator and victim.

Multi-agency professionals can support the police by ensuring they share relevant information via submission of a Community Partnership Information Sharing Form (CPI), Safeguarding Referral or Crime Report. Details are available on the [Safe 4 Me](#) website.



Where can I get more information?

[Safeguarding Hub](#)

[Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit](#)

[Safe 4 Me](#)