



ABSCONDING

“Left the Department
Refusing Assessment
and Treatment”



Absconding was a theme in 14% of NRLS clinical incidents, including 59 paediatric (under 16) reports.

What we need to know:

- Do they have an impairment or disturbance of the functioning of their mind or brain (e.g. mental disorder, drug intoxication)?
- Do they have capacity?
- Do they pose a flight risk, likely to refuse treatment or abscond?

Mitigation methods:

- All EDs should have written documentation to support mental health assessment.
- All EDs should undertake and document a capacity assessment.
- EDs should prioritise the clinical assessment of patients at high risk of absconding.

Learning Points:

Identify those at risk of absconding, protect those at risk & use the tools available to you

RCEM guidance:

[The Patient who Absconds](#) [The Mental Capacity Act in EM](#) [RCEM MH Toolkit](#) [Mental Health CQUIN](#)
[Emergency Department Care](#)

For other RCEM issued Safety Alerts and Safety Newsflashes see:
www.rcem.ac.uk/safetyalerts