

WILTSHIRE POLICE FORCE PROCEDURE



MISSING PERSONS

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PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

Going missing should be treated as an indicator that the individual may be at risk of harm. The safeguarding of vulnerable people is paramount and a missing person report should be recognised as an opportunity to identify and address risks.

As per the APP for Missing Persons, the definition of 'missing' is as follows:

Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their wellbeing or otherwise confirmed.

This procedure provides the process and advice for officers and staff responding to reports of persons who are reported missing and should be read in line with [APP Major investigation and public protection > Missing persons](#).

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES and OTHER DOCUMENTS

[Missing Persons Policy](#)

[Management of Missing Persons and AWOL Protocol](#)

[Modern Slavery Policy and Procedure](#)

[Pan Wiltshire Missing From Home and Care Protocol](#)

[Collection of Missing Persons Data](#)

AUTHORISED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

[Missing Persons](#)

[NDM](#)

[Child Protection](#)

[Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

DATA PROTECTION

Any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual recorded as a consequence of this procedure will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection App 2018, General Data Protection Regulations, and the Force [Data Protection Policy](#).

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

This document has been assessed as suitable for public release.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This procedure will be monitored by the Detective Inspector responsible for the Missing Portfolio and will be reviewed every two years.

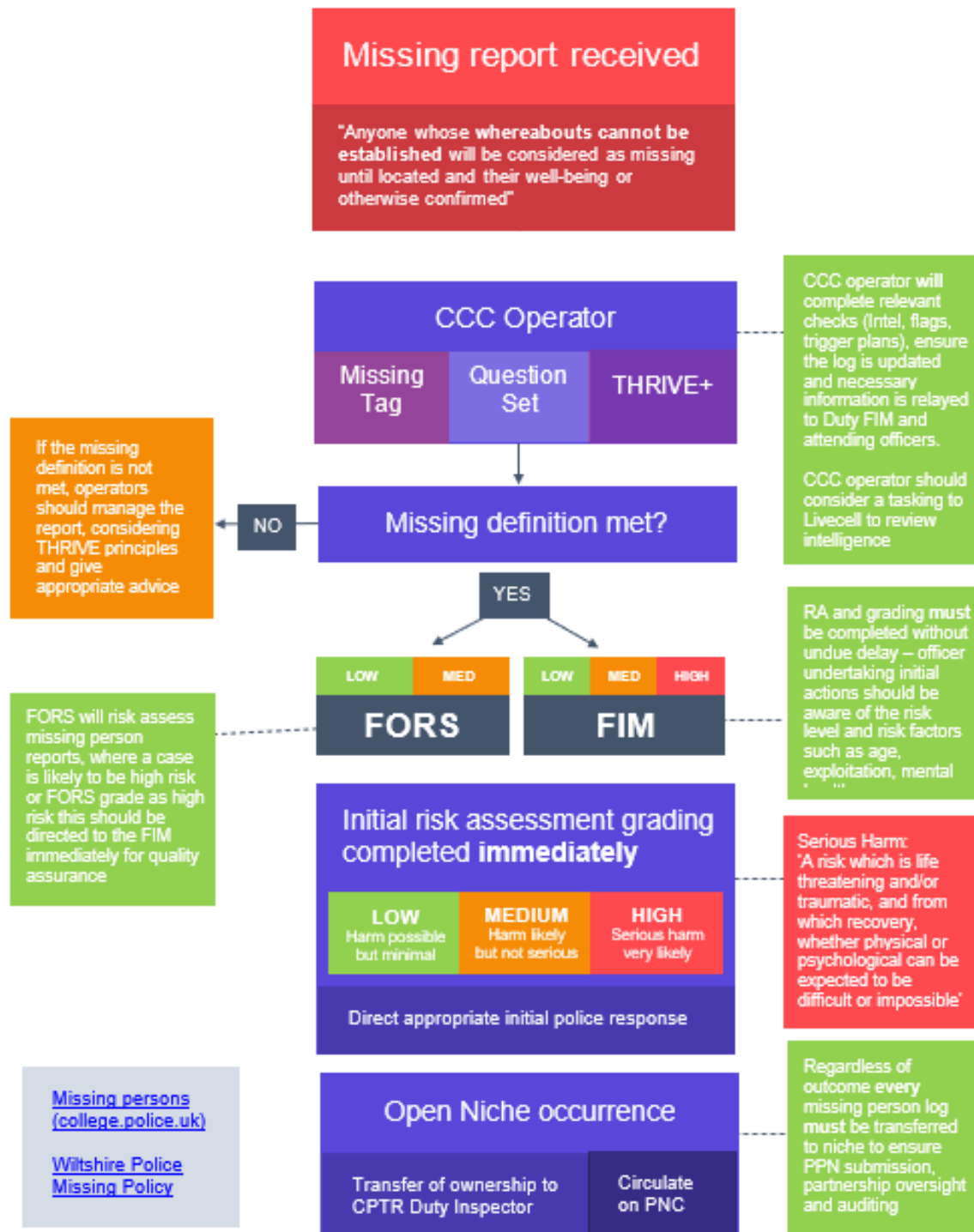
WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

The Head of PPD and the Detective Inspector responsible for the Missing Portfolio are responsible for this procedure. All queries relating to this procedure should be directed to them.

Any reports of a crime in action, kidnap and extortion, child abduction, or immediate child protection issue WILL NOT fall under this procedure. Such cases must be considered a crime in action and Child Protection procedures will apply and supersede this process.

1. INITIAL ACTIONS

1.1 Missing Person Process Chart



FIMs should use the NDM to consider the status of the person being reported as missing. Where the reporting person has a parental or caring responsibility for the person being reported, and has not as yet completed the enquiries that are expected of them, they should be allowed to complete these before police activity begins, on a threat, harm, risk basis.

Where a person cannot complete these enquiries due to the circumstances, or these enquiries do not result in the person being located, then the person will be recorded as missing and police activity will begin. A timeframe for the activity must be defined, with review from the FIM. These circumstances must be fully documented with rationale.

1.2 The Risk Assessment Table

The Risk Assessment Table should be used to guide the appropriate level of police response to a missing person report. The NDM should also be used in conjunction with this.

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.	The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.	The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely.
Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm.	This category requires an active and measured response by the police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting.	<p>This category almost always requires the immediate deployment of police resources – action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness. A member of senior management must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases could lead to the appointment of an Investigating Officer (IO) and possibly an SIO, and a police Search Advisor (PoISA).</p> <p>There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate. The MPB should be notified of the case without undue delay. Children’s Services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.</p>

Risk of serious harm has been defined as:

A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological can be expected to be difficult or impossible.

2. INVESTIGATIONS

2.1 Initial Investigation Actions

When a person is categorised as missing, an investigation must be initiated that is appropriate to the level of risk assessed. Officers should establish facts as to why a person is missing and consider whether any criminal offences have been committed. Information collected whilst conducting enquiries should be recorded to provide intelligence for current or future investigations and safeguarding.

The primary consideration for the initial investigating officer is the safety of the missing person.

Investigating officer should create an initial investigation plan and ensure all tasks are recorded on the missing persons occurrence report.

Golden Hour considerations should be made, as per the below.

Victims	Identify, support and sensitively preserve evidence
Scenes	Identify, preserve, assess and commence log
Suspects	Identify, arrest and preserve
Witnesses	Identify, support and sensitively preserve evidence
Log	Decisions and rationale, circumstances, resources and conditions
Family/community	Identify, inform, primary support (needs, concerns, expectations, sensitivity)
Physical evidence	Preservation (CCTV, public transport, escape routes, ambulances, hospitals)
Intelligence	Identify, prioritise, maximise, exploit, consider, community and open source
Prevent contamination	Victims, scenes, witnesses, suspects
Lines of responsibility	Identify, inform, brief, coordinate and review

The investigating officer should also consider the following:

- All actions taken within a missing person investigation should be proportionate and commensurate with the risk
- Notify a supervisor to ensure oversight; this should happen immediately in high-risk cases, and as soon as is practicable in all other cases
- Gather sufficient information about the missing person to enable an effective and thorough investigation to be conducted
- Consider taking a full statement from the reporting person, as well as any other key individuals
- Conduct initial searches of relevant premises, recording the extent and nature of the search.
- Consider seizing electronic devices, computers, and other documentation and obtain details of usernames and passwords
- Obtain photos of the missing person
- Obtain details of the missing person's mobile phone, and if they have it with them. If they are believed to be in possession of their mobile, arrange for a TextSafe to be sent by the charity, Missing People
- Obtain details of any vehicles that they may have access to and place markers on relevant vehicles on PNC without delay
- Consider obtaining any physical evidence of identity such as fingerprints or DNA samples in accordance with [Code of Practice \(2009\) Collection of Missing Persons Data](#) which states the police should obtain suitable identification samples within 24 hours of the missing person report for high risk cases and within 7 days for medium and low cases
- Confirm if the person has taken their passport and consider prompt circulation if it is deemed likely that the individual may leave the country
- Make all immediate relevant enquiries and take immediate actions to locate the missing person
- Consider the need for specialist officers or resources (e.g. dogs, helicopters, financial investigators)
- Circulate the missing person's details on local information systems and to relevant local partners, such as hospitals, ambulance service, taxis, and bus firms

Social networking sites can provide important evidential and intelligence opportunities and can support wider media appeals. Investigating officers should ask the missing person's family and friends if they have access to the missing person's social media accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. to see whether the individual has posted any relevant information. The [Digital Investigations and Intelligence Unit \(DIIU\)](#) can provide support and advice on this.

It is important for an individual, who knows the missing person, to be identified as the point of contact for the police. The police will agree with them when they will next be contacted. The person should be provided with a reference number and given details of how to contact the police if they have any further information, or if they wish to receive an update. An assessment should be made of the level of support required for the family or person with caring responsibility. Information should then be provided regarding additional organisations that may be able to assist or support them.

3. SUPERVISION AND REVIEW

Officers not below the rank of Inspector must ensure that appropriate levels of action are taken to locate the missing person based on the risk assessment. Ownership of missing person enquiries will always be held by the Duty Inspector, unless specific ownership is directed by the Duty Superintendent, and they are responsible for handing over enquiries to subsequent Duty Inspectors on a shift-by-shift basis. Handovers must be documented on the Niche OEL and will include:

- Review of the circumstances
- Review of the risk
- Allocating an OIC
- Setting priority lines of enquiry

All high risk investigations will have an allocated SIO no later than 48hours after high risk designation, this will normally be the duty Missing DI unless directed by the Duty Superintendent. The role of the SIO will be to undertake reviews and provide investigative oversight, direction and prioritisation similar to other serious and complex investigations.

The Duty Inspector must ensure that an OIC is appointed for their tour of duty following a handover.

The Duty Inspector should consider whether a referral should be made to a Detective Supervisor, POLSA, or other specialist unit, with the support of the DMM process. All current and active missing persons will be considered by the DMM chair on a daily basis. The Duty Superintendent must ensure that adequate arrangements exist to maintain the quality and progress of an investigation, and that the risk assessment is appropriate.

Ownership of the missing person investigation will rest with the force area in which the majority of the enquiries sit. An investigation must not be delayed whilst discussions take place to agree primacy.

Missing Persons Review Schedule:

	High Risk	Medium Risk Over 18	Medium/Low Risk Under 18	Low Risk Over 18
24 Hours	D/Insp		D/Insp	
48 Hours		D/Insp		D/Insp
7 Days	D/Insp	Duty Insp	D/Insp	Duty Insp
14 Days	MCIT SIO	Duty Insp	D/Insp	Duty Insp
21 Days	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	Duty Insp	D/Insp	Duty Insp
28 Days	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	D/Insp	D/Insp	D/Insp
56 Days	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	D/Insp	D/Insp	D/Insp
3 Months	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	D/Insp	D/Insp	D/Insp
6 Months	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	D/Insp	D/Insp	D/Insp
9 Months	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	D/Insp	D/Insp	D/Insp
12 Months	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	MCIT SIO	MCIT SIO	MCIT SIO
Annually	D/Insp (MCIT if required)	MCIT SIO	MCIT SIO	MCIT SIO

The reviewing Inspector must:

- Review the level of risk
- Ensure all set actions are being undertaken
- Set new actions and enquiries in order to bring the investigation to a successful outcome
- Set future review date as and if appropriate

The review must be recorded in the Niche OEL and the missing/absent TAB within the Niche record to redate the review clock. The next review date is to be based on the time/date reported.

See [Missing Person Reviews on a Page \(Wilts\).docx](#) for a one page overview on this section.

4. PRESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Media appeals can be considered. Any decision to publicise the case should be made in consultation with the individual's family. However, a case may be publicised without the family's consent if it is in the missing person's best interest to do so. For 'Looked After Children', Parental Responsibility will need to be ascertained through Children's Social Care and the relevant consent obtained from them before any press release is made. All media contact must be actioned through the HQ Press Office.

It will not be appropriate to use the media in every case, but when it is used consideration should be given to the purpose of using publicity, the associated risks, and what types of appeals are best suited to aid the investigation. A media strategy must be developed in high profile cases.

5. LONG TERM MISSING CASES

On occasion all reasonable lines of investigation into the whereabouts of a missing person may be exhausted without locating them. This may happen relatively quickly after the person is reported missing, but it is more likely after the passage time. Only after the matter has been thoroughly reviewed by both a Detective Inspector and MCIT SIO can the case be re-categorised as Long Term Missing.

The investigation must never be closed in these circumstances nor the person removed from PNC, and the family or persons with relevant interest in the case must be updated to this effect. Further review time should be set in accordance with the review timetable. It will often be appropriate that a Detective Inspector takes responsibility and ownership for the case to provide continuity and appropriate oversight for the investigation.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RETURN

Effective management of the return of a missing person should be considered as part of the investigation. The investigation cannot be concluded until the full circumstances of the missing episode are explored, and effective safeguarding measures put in place.

It will not usually be appropriate for a missing person case to be closed without the individual being seen by the police or relevant professional. There maybe circumstances where it is impractical to sight a returned missing person due to their circumstances e.g. they are abroad or are deliberately making themselves unavailable to the police; in these circumstances the case can be closed with clear rational and senior officer authorisation.

For guidance on effectively managing the return of a missing person, see the [APP for Missing Persons - Management of Return](#).

6.1 Prevention Interviews

Officers should conduct prevention interviews when sighting a missing person that has been located. Prevention interviews are an essential tool in understanding why people go missing and can identify risks of exploitation, they are an opportunity to intervene at a crucial time. Officers conducting prevention interviews must use an investigative mindset and be professionally curious.

If a child is not engaging or is aggressive to an officer conducting a prevention interview, this could be a sign of groomed behaviour.

Information from a prevention interview will be submitted on the niche missing occurrence and, if relevant, the PPN to ensure that the information is shared appropriately. Any intelligence will be submitted on the force intelligence system.

Officers should consider the following when conducting prevention interviews:

- What are the push/pull factors that have caused the person to go missing
- What happened during the missing episode
- What locations did the person travel to; how did they get there
- Are there any concerns or welfare issues
- Does the person feel safe in their current location
- Does the person have any injuries or visible indicators
- Are there any non-verbal considerations eg. physical or emotional
- Is there any further information from parent, carers, friends or associates
- Does the individual have any new clothing or items which is unusual or out of place

Any evidence of Child Exploitation should be acted upon, and staff should seek early advice from Sentinel.

7. CROSS BORDER TRANSFERS

Difficulties can arise when a person reported missing resides outside the area where the report is being made, e.g. a student in temporary accommodation or a day trip visitor. The police area that receives the report must record it and carry out all necessary initial actions. If the responsibility for a case is subsequently transferred to another force area, the rationale for doing so must be recorded and written acknowledgement from the receiving force should be obtained.

When deciding where ownership of the investigation lies, the principal issue is to consider where the majority of the enquiries are and who has the greatest opportunity of locating the missing person. It is probable that the place where the person was last seen would generate the majority of the initial enquiries although this is not always the case such as out-of-area placements.

For all cross border transfers a [Missing Person Transfer Request form](#) will need to be completed and sent to the receiving forces control centre.

Any transfer requests received into Wiltshire Police should be reviewed and agreed by the Duty Inspector for the relevant area.

For guidance on cross-border cases, see the [APP for Missing Persons – Cross-Border Cases](#).

8. SAFEGUARDING

8.1 Trigger Plans

Where it is assessed that an individual is at risk of going missing again, consideration can be given to the creation of a trigger plan. Trigger plans gathers relevant information and key actions that can be taken by investigators to resolve a missing episode as quickly as possible. Trigger plans should be regularly reviewed to ensure that the information is relevant and up to date.

Where a trigger plan is in place investigators should ensure that it is reviewed and attached to the missing person occurrence on Niche.

Referrals and advice in relation to trigger plans can be made to the Missing Person Coordinators missingpersons@wiltshire.police.uk

8.2 Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN)

CAWNs are issued to persons who are suspected of placing a child at risk of offences being committed against them, contrary to the following legislation:

- If the child is under 16 years of age – [S2 Child Abduction Act 1984](#).
- If the child is under 18 years of age and in local authority care – [S31 Children Act 1989](#); [S49 Children Act 1989](#).

For guidance on safeguarding children through the use of a CAWN, see [this document](#) from the College of Policing and NPCC.

8.3 Child Rescue Alert (CRA)

The decision to use the national CRA can be made by the FIM. If activated, the process requires careful management due to the number of calls that could be received by the force. In order to support the appeal, the services of the Casualty Bureau and HOLMES MIR should be utilised. These services are facilitated through the force lead for CRA, who is also the force lead for Missing. In order to support the investigation, the force lead for CRA must be contacted to coordinate activity.

If a CRA is activated following a decision by a nominated SIO for the investigation, they too should utilise the force lead for CRA to manage this tactic.

Criteria for CRA

- Child is apparently under 18
- There is a real, immediate risk to life
- There is sufficient information available to enable the public to assist the police in locating the child

It is essential that CRA is considered as early as possible if the circumstances fit. SIOs/FIMs should not defer the decision to launch if there is a likelihood of increased harm coming to a child as a consequence.

8.4 Sentinel

The Sentinel team can provide advice and guidance to officers managing missing investigations and/or dealing with any exploitation concerns (sentinel@wiltshire.police.uk).

Further advice and guidance is also available through the Sentinel SharePoint page [Sentinel - Exploitation and Missing \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

8.5 Radicalisation

The Counter Terrorism and security Act 2015 places a general duty on specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The purpose of Prevent is at its heart to safeguard and support vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Factors that may have a bearing on someone becoming vulnerable to radicalisation may include: peer pressure, influence from other people or via the internet, bullying, crime against them or their involvement in crime, anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self-esteem or identity and personal or political grievances.

If officers/staff believe or suspect that a person has gone missing (whether in this country or abroad) for purposes linked to terrorism and radicalisation they should report this directly to the Missing person SIO / duty Inspector without delay. SIO / duty Inspector will consider the level of risk and appropriate response (on a case by case basis). An appropriate intelligence submission should be made and the duty officer from CTPSW can be informed.

[See also [Prevent Duty Guidance](#)]

9. CATEGORIES OF MISSING

9.1 Wanted/Missing

There will be occasions when people may be reported as missing who are wanted in relation to:

- Their suspected involvement in a criminal investigation
- An outstanding warrant issued by a court
- Having absconded from lawful custody/care; being absent without leave (AWOL)
- Having entered the country without appropriate authority

The police should evaluate each case on an individual basis and respond appropriately, according to the priority that should be given in that case. For example, if a person is wanted for a minor matter but the missing person risk assessment indicates a high risk, then it may be appropriate to deal with the case as a missing persons enquiry. Alternatively, a low risk missing person wanted for serious crime may be more appropriately dealt with as a wanted person, and the correct investigative approach applied. The principle is to adopt an approach that will bring both matters to the safest, most efficient conclusion.

Forces should seek to avoid duplicating the investigation and record keeping. The investigating or supervisory officer will need to consider and decide which response and investigative approach to take based on a risk assessment and should be guided by the national decision model.

When completing the risk assessment, decision makers should consider both the prevailing risk to, and vulnerability of, the missing person and the public, as well as the requirement to pursue the individual, detain them, and ensure that they are subject to criminal justice processes. The views of the reporting person should be taken into account, and the rationale for deciding on whether to treat the individual as 'missing' should be discussed with them. Officers making decisions should be particularly mindful of the risks associated with children.

If the decision is taken to treat an individual as 'wanted', a missing report will still need to be recorded in order to accurately reflect the appropriate level of investigation for that missing person.

A missing person report may be closed or marked 'inactive' whilst a 'wanted' investigation continues.

9.2 Looked After Children

Children who go missing who are in the care of a statutory organisation, such as a care home, will be investigated by police and assistance given to help locate the individual. The overall responsibility for the care and welfare of the individual remains the responsibility of the Local Authority and they should, when able, make relevant enquiries to locate the child. Early liaison with Children's Services should be undertaken.

Enquiries should be made, either by the police or partner agencies, with the child's immediate and extended family or network of friends. It should be made clear to them that there is an expectation that they persuade the child to return to their placement in the event that they make contact with the child.

Looked After Children may have suffered abuse or disruptive family support networks, and so are more vulnerable to being victims of offences and/or exploitation. Neighbourhood Policing Teams have good relationships with local children's care homes and so should be involved in investigations if a looked after child is reported as missing. Advice can also be sought from Sentinel in relation to risk of exploitation.

9.3 Concern for Welfare

A concern for welfare will be recorded where there is a report of a genuine and justifiable concern for a person's welfare or well-being and the report does not outline any information which may indicate that the person is missing.

The Command and Control Centre must make careful enquiries and seek advice to ensure that incidents are classified correctly as 'missing person' if the information from the caller indicates as such. FIMs will use the NDM to consider the status of the person being reported as missing. Where the reporting person has a parental or caring responsibility for the person being reported, and has not as yet completed the enquiries that are expected of them, they should be allowed to complete these before police activity begins, on a threat, harm, risk basis. Where a person cannot complete these enquiries due to the circumstances, or these enquiries do not result in the person being located, then the person will be recorded as missing and police activity will begin. A timeframe for the activity must be defined, with review from the FIM. These circumstances must be fully documented with rationale.

If a report is initially classified as a 'concern for welfare' and is later realised to be a missing person, the process for a missing person must be followed.

It is unacceptable to use the 'concern for welfare' categorisation to avoid or delay a full missing person investigation, as such action may leave a vulnerable person at risk of harm.

9.4 Truancy

Truancy is not normally a situation that should be dealt with as a missing person investigation. The police should consider the circumstances behind any report of truancy to determine if there are any risk factors to indicate that a missing person investigation is warranted.

Truancy/unauthorised absences can indicate that a child or young person may be at risk, and any concerns should be shared with partners and investigated where appropriate.

9.5 Absconders from Medical Care

Where a person is reported to have left a place of assessment or treatment by a hospital or NHS trust without notifying staff at that location, they will not be recorded as a missing person or require a police deployment unless any of the following apply:

- An immediate and substantial risk to life or serious harm to the person or any other person if they are not found
- A risk arising in any way that would include lack of medical care, the person's age or other vulnerability, their mental health, inability to care for themselves, risk of suicide or self-harm and any risk posed to other persons

Hospital staff should only report people missing where they identify a significant risk to the patient or others. They have a duty to ensure the welfare of the individual and should be expected to undertake reasonable enquiries to establish their whereabouts and wellbeing before reporting them to the police. A patient with mental capacity who refuses treatment and/or discharges themselves from hospital with an understanding of the risk posed to themselves will not be treated as a missing person.

The police have a duty to find any person where there is a significant risk to life or serious harm because of their injuries or illness, and where there is a possibility that they may suffer harm or are likely to have a serious illness or injury that they do not know about. In cases where significant risk is identified, it is important for the police to investigate, risk assess, and record these in line with this procedure. It is also important to obtain full details of the individual's medical condition, including the impact of not taking any medication, in order to risk assess and decide on any actions. Where relevant, advice should be sought from qualified medical staff on the likely outcomes of an individual not receiving treatment, and their ability to look after themselves or to survive.

9.6 Mental Health

The [APP for AWOL Patients](#) provides guidance on the police response to people with mental ill health or vulnerabilities who have been reported as absent from their home or a secure setting.

9.7 Tracing Relatives

The police service is not a tracing agency and there are specialist organisations that are better placed to assist an individual who wishes to locate a lost relative. See the Missing Persons Bureau for more information.

If, however, it is suspected that the person may be at risk of harm, such as exploitation or abuse, an investigation should be commenced to make the missing person safe.

Interpol does not provide a family tracing service except in high risk or life and death situations.

9.8 Vulnerable Adults

Adults can be vulnerable when missing. This includes those who are accommodated in residential care, day patients at hospital, or those experiencing personal problems.

For further information, see [Vulnerable Adults APP](#) and [Mental Vulnerability and Illness APP](#).

9.9 Immigration

When a person who is reported missing to the police, has entered or stayed in the country without the appropriate authority, the decision on which authority should deal with the report will depend on the circumstances of disappearance and level of risk. The priority of the police is to ensure the individual is safe and well.

Consideration should be given to whether:

- The individual is a victim of modern slavery or is being exploited.
- The person is intentionally missing and seeking to avoid immigration procedures or repatriation.
- There are any suspicious circumstances surrounding their disappearance.

The police should consider the extent to which the individual is vulnerable, whether they have been able to exercise consent, and whether there is any reason to suspect any degree of coercion or deceit. If the circumstances suggest that the individual has absconded to avoid immigration procedures, then the police do not have a duty to record and investigate them as a missing person.

Children must always be considered as vulnerable and not being able to consent to their own exploitation. Safeguarding issues must take priority and this should be the responsibility of all agencies. Advice and guidance around concerns for exploitation can be gained from Sentinel.

Unaccompanied Migrant Children - Operation Innerste

Operation Innerste is a joint national initiative by Immigration Enforcement and the police to improve the safeguarding response to migrant children. The focus is on building early rapport with migrant children at the point of first contact, to build trust, and explain the support, services, and protection that the children are entitled to. When an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) goes missing after being accommodated by the Local Authority (LA) the LA will normally report the child as missing to the police, triggering a missing person investigation. Incidents of migrant children and UASC going missing from LA care may be linked to serious crime, such as modern slavery or CSE. These children can be extremely vulnerable and should be recorded as missing persons when their whereabouts are unknown. Anyone under the age of 18 years (or who claims to be 18 years old and who hasn't been age assessed) must be treated as a child and child protection issues must take priority. If a UASC goes missing, and whilst missing subsequently turns 18 and becomes an adult, this does not automatically change their status from 'missing' to 'wanted'. Each case must be considered individually and risk assessed appropriately, with any change in status from 'missing' to 'wanted' being clearly rationalised and recorded.

If a young person is accompanied by an adult, consideration should be given as to whether there is any cause for concern for the child's safety. If a child appears to be with a person willingly, this does not mean that they are not being coerced. Although young people may appear to be in the country willingly, they may be brought here by deception or coercion and may believe that they have no other option but to comply. They may also have been led to believe that figures of authority cannot be trusted.

9.10 International Investigation

For guidance on International Investigations, see the [APP for Missing Persons – International Investigations](#).

9.11 Non-UK Nationals

For guidance on missing non-UK nationals, see the [APP for Missing Persons – Missing non-UK nationals](#).

9.12 International Child Abduction

For guidance on international child abduction, see the [APP for Missing Persons – International child abduction](#).

9.13 Unidentified Persons

For guidance on unidentified persons, see the [APP for Missing Persons – Found remains/people](#).

9.14 Parental Abduction

Under the Child Abduction Act 1984, it is an offence for a person connected with a child under the age of 16 years to take or send that child out of the UK without appropriate consent from either the child's parents or an individual with parental responsibility.

The police should take immediate action with an all ports alert where there is a real and imminent danger of abduction within the next 24 hours. There does not need to be any type of court order in place for the police to take this action to prevent abduction.

10. PROTOCOLS AND OPERATIONS

10.1 Herbert Protocol

The Herbert Protocol is a national scheme designed to help police, carers, and family/friends locate a missing person with dementia. It is important that families and carers feel there is something they can do to help when someone goes missing. Carers, family members and friends can complete the Herbert Protocol booklet in advance, recording important details such as medication, mobile numbers, places previously located, significant locations to that individual, and a recent photograph. In the event of a family member or friend going missing, the booklet can be quickly handed to the police, reducing the time taken gathering information during the initial, critical stages of a search.

When attending a missing report where the missing person is known to have dementia, both in care home and private settings, officers should ask if the missing person has a completed Herbert Protocol to assist with enquiries. This should be returned to the carer of family member once relevant information has been obtained.

If a missing person with dementia does not have a Herbert Protocol, when they return and are sighted, officers should sit down with carers or family to signpost them to the Herbert Protocol.

The protocol is voluntary, and the responsibility for completing and keeping the document up to date lies with carers, family, or friends of the individual.

More information can be found on the [Herbert Protocol SharePoint page](#).

10.2 Philomena Protocol

The Philomena Protocol is a national scheme within which staff within children's homes identify children who are at risk of going missing, and then record information about them that can be used to help find them quickly should they go missing. Carers are encouraged to complete the Philomena Protocol form in detail, and store it somewhere safe, along with a recent photograph of the child. Part 1 of the form is completed by the carer(s) if they are concerned that the child is at risk of going missing. Part 2 of the form is completed by the carer(s) if or when the child is reported missing to the police.

The form holds detail such as description, friends, associates, locations frequented, phone numbers, and social media accounts. All these details can be used to help find the child quickly if they do go missing.

When a report of a missing child is made by children's home staff, staff within the CCC should ask the reporting person if the missing child has a Philomena Protocol; they are prompted to do so within the question set. If a Philomena Protocol is in place for the missing child, the care home staff should provide a copy of the completed form to the attending officer. If a Looked After Child is

repeatedly going missing, and they do not have a Philomena Protocol, the carer/staff should be encouraged to create one. A flowchart for carers and a copy of the form can be found on the [Philomena Protocol SharePoint page](#).

If attending a children's home or foster carer address to respond to a report of a missing child, the attending officer should ask staff/the carer if the missing child has a Philomena Protocol, and if they do, the officer should ask for a copy of the completed form and accompanying photograph(s). The officer should then upload the document(s) onto the Niche occurrence as soon as possible, to assist with enquiries. These actions should take place for every missing episode, with the updated form uploaded to Niche each time.

10.3 Operation Encompass

The Operation Encompass notification system enables timely information sharing between partner agencies in relation to police attendance of Domestic Abuse and Missing Person reports. All education settings aged 4 to 17 years old will be informed of children missing in Wiltshire.

DOCUMENT ADMINISTRATION

Ownership:

Department Responsible: Public Protection Department
Policy Owner/Author: Supt Ben MANT / DI Eirin MARTIN
Technical Author: Sophie ROGERS
Senior Officer/Manager Sponsor: ACC Crime and Justice

Revision History:

Revision Date	Version	Summary of Changes
25/05/2018	2.0	Data Protection section amended to reflect implementation of GDPR and new DPA.
25/10/2018	3.0	Version 2.0 reviewed at 12 months and amended in line with updated APP guidance. New s14 Radicalisation added.
	4.0	

Approvals:

This document requires the following approvals:

Name & Title	Date of Approval	Version
D/Supt Ben Mant, Head of PPD	25.08.2022	4.0
ACC Deb Smith, ACC Crime, Justice, and Vulnerability		4.0
Continuous Improvement Team	04.09.2022	4.0

Distribution:

This document has been distributed via:

Name & Title	Date of Issue	Version
E-Brief	06.09.2022	4.0
Email to relevant affected Staff/Officers	05.09.2022	4.0
Other: Aide Memoire	05.09.2022	4.0

Equality Impact Assessment:

Has an EIA been completed? If no, please indicate the date by which it will be completed. If yes, please send a copy of the EIA with the policy to the force Policy Officer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date:
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Consultation:

List below who you have consulted with on this policy (incl. committees, groups, etc):

Name & Title	Date Consulted	Version

Implications of the Policy:

Training Requirements

No additional training requirements.

IT Infrastructure

No additional IT Infrastructure required.