



07501 PROCEDURE – MISSING PERSONS

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| Version | 7.1 | Last updated | 06/12/2018 | Review date | 06/12/2019 |
| Equality Impact Assessment | | | High | | |
| Owning department | | | Public Protection Department (PPD) | | |

1. About this procedure

- 1.1. This Procedure sets out the Hampshire Constabulary response to and the investigation of Missing person reports. It establishes the minimum standards expected in order to ensure that each such incident is recorded, investigated and managed professionally, ethically and sensitively.
- 1.2. The purpose of Missing persons APP and this Procedure is to ensure that staff understand their responsibility to effectively investigate cases of Missing Persons and that appropriate management structures facilitate their work to find and safeguard such Persons as quickly as practicable.
- 1.3. The College of Policing's [Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\)](#) is the official national standard for Missing Persons Investigations. [APP](#) has been fully replicated in this bespoke Hampshire Constabulary guidance. This has been primary knowledge base which it has been necessary to produce to cater for operational Policing structures, and incident recording, within Hampshire Constabulary.
- 1.4. The Procedure is supported by a [Missing Persons Toolkit](#), which provides a clear summary of operational guidance to assist Officers and staff. The Toolkit is intended to assist Officers and staff in an operational setting, but Officers and staff must consult the full Procedure for detailed and definitive instructions.
- 1.5. This Procedure provides appropriate guidance and links to the Code of Ethics. It supports Hampshire Constabulary's Six Areas of Focus in the following way:
 - 1.5.1. Building Partnerships that enable a better Public Service:
 - Ensuring that missing people are considered on a multi-agency basis, through close partnership working with Local Authorities, and Charities such as Missing People UK, the British Red Cross and the Salvation Army.
 - 1.5.2. Identifying and Protecting those who need our help:
 - Ensuring that Officers and Staff consider the widest possible range of information held by the carers, the reporting person, the Police, partner agencies and charities, when responding to reports of missing people.



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- Ensuring that missing people are effectively safeguarded, and those in need of longer term support are referred and signposted appropriately.

1.5.3. Track, Assess, Learn and Improve:

- Ensuring that missing person investigations are regularly reviewed at an appropriate management level, and that lessons learnt from previous missing person episodes are fully considered. Officers and staff are expected to use the National Decision Making Model, and other approved tools, to reach proportionate and properly risk assessed decisions.

2. Risk assessments / Health and Safety considerations

2.1. Health and safety risks to Police Officers and Staff when engaged in operational policing activity related to missing persons has been considered, and is adequately dealt with in existing Force and Joint Operations Unit risk assessments.

2.2. This procedure fully adopts the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) in regards to managing the risk to members of the public when investigating reports of missing people.

2.3. General Information

2.3.1. Definition of 'Missing'

2.3.1.1. 'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.'

2.3.2. Risk assessment and response

2.3.2.1. Risk assessment should be guided by the College of Policing [Risk principles](#), the [National Decision Model](#) and Police [Code of Ethics](#). All Missing People (including children) can fit into any of the below risks.

2.3.3. No Apparent Risk (absent)

2.3.3.1. There is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public.

Ownership remains with the Contact Management. Actions to locate the subject and/or gather further information should be agreed with the informant and a latest review time set to reassess the risk.

2.3.4. Low Risk



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2.3.4.1. The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.

2.3.5. Medium Risk

2.3.5.1. The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.

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.

hours.

2.3.6. High Risk

2.3.6.1. The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely.

This category almost always requires the **immediate deployment** of police resources – Specific actions may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness. A member of the senior management team must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an investigating officer (IO) and possibly an SIO, and a police search adviser (PoISA).

There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate. The Missing Persons Bureau (MPB) should be notified of the case without undue delay. Children's services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.

2.3.7. 'Risk of Serious Harm'

2.3.7.1. 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.

2.3.8. The Initial Risk Assessment process has two stages:

- The Risk Assessment applied by **Contact Management** staff determines the urgency of the initial deployment.
- The Risk Assessment conducted by the **Initial Investigating Officer (IIO)** determines the approach to the investigation based on a more thorough assessment of risk, having regard to all the known circumstances.

2.3.9. Common Risk Assessment Errors

2.3.9.1. When assessing risks to children, research has suggested that Police Officers and Staff often incorrectly classify boys as being at lower risk than girls.



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- 2.3.9.2. Officers and staff must be careful to avoid unconscious bias in respect of any characteristics of the missing person to other cultural assumptions which might lead to a flawed risk assessment process.

2.3.10. Risk Grading & Child Exploitation

- 2.3.10.1. Repeated episodes are a recognised trigger factor to identify that a child to young person may be a victim of Criminal or Sexual Exploitation, or may at high risk of being exploited in the future. Individuals who have been assessed as being at risk of exploitation will be highlighted on RMS with a warning flag. Missing Person risk assessments for persons under 18 years old must consider whether the person is displaying, or has previously displayed, vulnerability to Exploitation. If it is suspected that they are or have recently been in situations and circumstances where they are likely to have been victims of Exploitation and the circumstances are such that immediacy cannot be ruled out, then any report of them going missing should be treated as High Risk. Further information on Criminal and Sexual Exploitation of Children can be found [here](#).

2.4. Review Expectations

- 2.4.1. The need for a review must be dictated by the perceived risk level to the person, with high risk cases being prioritised for immediate review. All reviews will be recorded on RMS.
- 2.4.2. All missing person cases must be initially reviewed by the Sergeant of the Investigating Officer, and the Response and Patrol Inspector. Review timings and review activity are as set out below.

2.4.3. No Apparent Risk

- 2.4.3.1. Contact Management Supervisor after 8 hours, and then every 24hrs.

2.4.4. All Risk levels (other than No Apparent Risk)

- 2.4.4.1. All missing person investigations must be initially reviewed by the Sergeant of the investigating officer and an Inspector as soon as practicable.

2.4.5. Low Risk



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2.4.5.1. **Constable** - After the mandatory initial review, undertake a dynamic review on receipt of new information, update the Current Situation Report (CSR) and refer updates to a Sergeant.

2.4.5.2. **Sergeant:** After the mandatory initial review, a formal review is only required if there is a change in risk level.

2.4.5.3. **Inspector:** Check, verify and confirm accuracy of the CSR prior to DMM. Discretion to implement formal review based on current or new information.

2.4.6. Medium Risk

2.4.6.1. **Constable:** When appointed as an investigating officer, check and verify to confirm the CSR content, understand the strategy and undertake Lines of Enquiry (LOE).

2.4.6.2. **Sergeant:** After the mandatory initial review, a review of the strategy and LOE will take place at the point where a new investigating officer is appointed for that tour of duty. Sergeants will set (or review) the strategy, lines of enquiry and list these *in priority order*. Check and verify to confirm accuracy of CSR content. The Day shift Sergeant will complete a formal review immediately prior to the Daily Management Meeting (DMM) process. A formal review is required where a change of risk level is necessary.

2.4.6.3. **Inspector:** A formal review is required at least once during the duty day.

2.4.7. High Risk

2.4.7.1. A High Risk Missing Person's investigation requires a formal review from the outset at the ranks of Sergeant and Inspector as soon as practicable after being alerted by the Initial Investigating Officer (IIO) or subsequent Investigating Officers.

2.4.7.2. **Sergeant:** After the mandatory initial review, a review of the strategy and LOE will take place by a Sergeant at the point where a new investigating officer is appointed for that tour of duty.

2.4.7.3. **Inspector:** A formal review is required at least once every tour of duty.

2.4.7.4. A Detective of Sergeant rank or higher will be asked to review the investigation where specialist investigative skills are required or where this is necessary for an effective review.

2.4.7.5. On receipt of new information, the Investigating Officer is expected to conduct a dynamic review, and indicate to their Sergeant when they believe a change in risk



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grading is appropriate. The Sergeant must contact the Inspector and brief them on the circumstances of the case if a review is required outside of the set times.

2.4.7.6. When setting subsequent review times, Inspectors should base this on expected investigative activity, the likelihood of any change in circumstances, and the level of risk faced by the missing person.

2.4.8. Missing Persons Process Chart

2.4.8.1. A detailed Missing Persons Process chart specific to Hampshire Constabulary can be found by clicking [here](#). The following guidance for staff details expectations at each stage of the process.

2.5. Contact Management

2.5.1. Contact Management staff will complete a list of questions with the reporting person so that an initial risk assessment can be made. This risk assessment dictates the priority of the despatch grade. This initial assessment of risk remains valid only until the initial attending officer has completed a full risk assessment with the reporting person.

2.5.2. The Contact Management initial risk assessment may be changed on receipt of any new information about the missing person, or the risks that they are subject to.

2.5.3. Contact Management will, prior to deployment of an officer, ensure that professionals, parents and carers have undertaken reasonably expected enquiries to try to establish the whereabouts of the individual. These enquiries should be specified by the contact management member of staff and should be supplied electronically or digitally in a written format if practicable.

2.5.3.1. The caller should also be directed towards [sources of help and advice on the Force Internet page](#).

2.5.4. Contact Management will apply a despatch grade, normally in line with the following:

- High Risk = Grade 1
- Medium Risk = Grade 2
- Low Risk = Grade 3
- NAR = Police Contact Centre

2.5.4.1. Contact Management Grading Criteria instructions will apply in all cases.

2.5.5. Despatch all Missing Person reports assessed as Low, Medium or High risk for deployment by Response & Patrol Officers.



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- 2.5.6. Create a record on the Force command and control system.
- 2.5.7. Circulate No Apparent Risk and Missing Persons on PNC.
- 2.5.8. Ensure that the Force Control Room Inspector is notified of all Missing Person incidents graded as High Risk as soon as practicable so that the correct command structure can be implemented.
- 2.5.9. Close Low and Medium Risk cases on Command & Control to RMS for continued investigation after the risk level has been established by officers. High Risk logs will remain open even when an RMS occurrence has been created until it is apparent that the resourcing and investigation of the incident can be managed locally without the need for Contact Management involvement.
- 2.5.10. Despatch an officer to conduct a Return (also known as a 'Safe and Well') interview when a Low, Medium or High Risk Missing Person returns or is found. If it transpires that upon returning home it is obvious that the person was mistakenly reported missing in good faith and there is no indication by the reporting person or carer that they have come to or been exposed to the risk of harm then no return interview need take place.
- 2.5.11. **No Apparent Risk cases:**
 - 2.5.11.1. The decision to classify someone as No Apparent Risk (NAR) can be considered for any person but must be justified and should only happen once RMS checks have been completed and all available information has been considered.
 - 2.5.11.2. Whilst the age of the reported person will often be a significant factor in determining the level of risk, there is no mandatory lower or upper age range which would mean that someone would automatically be categorised as NAR or Missing. However, if it is considered that the individual's age by itself makes them vulnerable then they must not be categorised as NAR.
 - 2.5.11.3. The following are examples of recent and relevant risk information which would mean that persons should only be classified as NAR by exception; and after the potential risk has been specifically precluded with a rationale documented in the Contact Management log or RMS occurrence.
 - Children 14 and under
 - Persons under 18 years who have a CSE flag, CSE intelligence or named in a Child abduction warning notice (CAWN)



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- Sex offenders
- Children in local authority or foster parent care
- Where a child may be subject to criminal exploitation

2.5.12. If the caller is informed that Police assess that the individual is NAR they will be supplied with an incident reference number.

2.5.13. Agree what self-generated enquiries the caller should make, and requested to re-contact the police if the individual is located or if there is any change in circumstances which might alter the level of risk.

2.5.14. The police are entitled to expect parents and carers, including staff acting in a parenting role in care homes, to accept normal parenting responsibilities and undertake reasonable actions to try and establish the whereabouts of the individual – see [Joint Responsibility](#).

2.5.15. This could include:

- Attempts to contact the child or adult
- Calling friends or family
- Visiting areas that the child or adult is known to frequent
- Visiting the place where the child or adult was known to be attending, e.g. a friend's house or party
- Checking to see if any items are missing from the home.

2.5.16. Agree a mutually acceptable time period when they will undertake to call the reporting person back for an update should nothing further be heard.

2.5.17. A review of No Apparent Risk cases must be undertaken by a Control Room Supervisor at least once every 8 hours. At any stage they can be raised to Missing upon receipt of new information which raises the perceived level of risk.

2.5.18. [Concern for Welfare](#)

2.5.18.1. Concern for Welfare is not an appropriate classification for NAR reports, or for reports of people leaving hospital prior to treatment. A concern for welfare occurs when there is a concern for someone's welfare and their location is known, or someone



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reasonably believes they know their location. This is different from those who are missing, as that person's location is unknown.

2.5.18.2. In the majority of cases, concerns for people where their location is known would not be a matter for Police unless life is immediately at risk.

2.6. Management of Return and Prevention Interviews

2.6.1. **Return Interviews** - A return (safe and well) visit is required for all Missing Persons graded as low, medium or high risk. Guidance for officers is contained within the [Toolkit](#), on the [intranet page](#) and in the [APP](#). Where a parent or carer is able to state to the satisfaction of Police or partner professionals that the Missing Person has not come to harm or been exposed to the risk of harm then a visit need not take place. An example of this eventuality is described in Section **2.5.10**.

2.6.2. If there is doubt as to whether the Missing Person is effectively safeguarded, has been subject of crime, or has suffered harm during the missing episode, then a Response Officer must complete a return visit as soon as possible.

2.6.3. **Return and Prevention Interviews** - In all other circumstances the responsibility for completing Return visits which also perform a dual function of being **Prevention Interviews** which are intended to establish the basis for multi-agency safeguarding strategies is as follows:

- Individuals flagged as High Risk of Exploitation (e.g. Criminal Exploitation or Child Sexual Exploitation) or Priority Missing and Managed by the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Team (METT) : These are often referred to as **Enhanced Safe and Well** visits and are arranged and completed by a member of MET, following automatic notification on RMS.
- Managed via a 3 in 90 Z Management Occurrence & 'Notify If' RMS Marker shown. Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT): Arranged and completed by the relevant Neighbourhood Policing Team.
- DMM Managed Cases (24hrs+): Arranged by the DMM

2.7. Initial (attending) Investigating Officer (IIO) and Subsequent Investigating Officers

2.7.1. Initial and subsequent IO's will take ownership of the Investigation and add themselves to the relevant Occurrence. They will complete a report and risk assessment to determine the risk level. Further information on RMS Missing Person processes can be found here. Further guidance in determining the Risk level can be found [here](#).



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- 2.7.2. Inform Control Room of their Risk Grading so that the incident can be migrated to RMS with the correct grading.
- 2.7.3. View each report as an investigation into a potentially serious offence and gather sufficient information to support an effective and thorough investigation.
- 2.7.4. Obtain and circulate photograph of the Missing Person, ideally a current likeness as opposed to a favourite photograph, in a digital format. Specify whether and how the photograph might differ from the actual appearance of the missing person.
- 2.7.5. Search the place where the individual has gone missing from and/or the home address. Specify buildings, rooms and vehicles searched, not searched and the extent. Officers must be focused on not only looking for the individual concerned but also evidence in relation to their disappearance or non-appearance.

The purpose is to locate the missing person and gather intelligence to assist the investigation. The extent of a search depends on the circumstances of each case. Document the search including the reasons for, and extent of, the search so that information is available if further searches are required.

- 2.7.6. Notify a Sergeant or other supervisor to agree a risk level and ensure oversight; immediately in High Risk cases, and as soon as practicable in all other cases.
- 2.7.7. Identify an individual who has responsibilities or concerns for the Missing Person who can act as the point of contact for the police:
 - Check what the reporting person has already done and agree self-help actions by them and others who may be able to help.
 - Agree with the individual when and how they will next be contacted and the level of support they require and record this information in RMS.
 - Provide this person with a reference number and details of how to contact the police should they have any further information.
- 2.7.8. Identify, prioritise and progress relevant actions to locate and safeguard the Missing Person. Further guidance can be accessed [here](#).
- 2.7.9. Generate a Missing Person report using the RMS Missing Persons module; ensuring Risk Assessments are completed and endorsed by a Sergeant.
- 2.7.10. Accurately record tasks and other activity relating to the missing Person on RMS.
- 2.7.11. Update the OEL with completed and outstanding actions throughout the investigation.



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- 2.7.12. Review the risk level upon receipt of any new information about the missing person and notify a supervisor. See the guidance in the Reviews section **2.4.7.5**.
- 2.7.13. If not already done, ensure the Missing Person is circulated on PNC Guidance on the circulation of Missing persons on PNC can be viewed [here](#).
- 2.7.14. If the person remains missing at the end of the tour of duty ensure that a Current Situation Report detailing lines of completed enquiry and those still outstanding is available to view on the Occurrence Enquiry Log (OEL).
- 2.7.15. If the person is a child under 18 or fits the definition of being an Adult at Risk and they remain missing at the end of the tour of duty, a PPN1 must be submitted to alert social care colleagues of the risk.
- 2.7.16. **When the Missing Person returns or is found**
- 2.7.16.1. Attend and complete a [Return Interview](#) with the Missing Person in all Low, Medium and High Risk cases as soon as practicable. Guidance for conducting effective return and Prevention interviews can be accessed [here](#).
- Do not treat these interviews as an administrative procedures to close a missing incident. The interview provides a valuable opportunity to find out useful information that may indicate harm suffered by the returning person. It can also identify details that may help trace the person in the event of a future missing episode.
- 2.7.16.2. Take appropriate action if information is disclosed indicating that the person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.
- 2.7.16.3. Create a fresh RMS occurrence if a crime has been identified.
- 2.7.16.4. Conduct AND record the Interview in line with the template available on the 'Return' tab in the RMS missing person report under the headings 'Circumstances of the persons return' and 'reasons for disappearance and details whilst away'.
- 2.7.16.5. Submit a PPN1 form if the Missing Person fits the Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) criteria for being an Adult at Risk, which is, someone of 18 years or over who:
- May be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who:
 - Is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- 2.7.16.6. Submit a PPN1 form for a child (under 18) In line with the Hampshire 4 LSCB Policy if the missing person:
- Has suffered harm (including emotional harm)



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- Is a child shown as a 3/90 case (Z MISPER management occurrence)
- Is at risk of Child Sexual or Criminal Exploitation

2.7.16.7. Other cases can be referred for any other reason if the Officer or Police Staff member believes there is a need to notify partners.

2.7.16.8. Finalise the Missing Person report on RMS.

2.8. First-line Supervision – Sergeants

2.8.1. The Sergeant will be responsible for managing missing person investigations.

2.8.2. Sergeants will:

- Ensure they are aware at the commencement of their tour of duty of any current outstanding Missing Persons.
- Prior to the end of their tour of duty, check, verify and record the initial attending Officers assessment of risk on RMS
- Identify an Officer in the Case to progress the investigation for that tour of duty and maintain contact with family and carers.
- Set, in priority order, immediate and longer-term investigative actions and clear lines of enquiry to locate the missing person and ensure that these are carried out.
- Manage the allocation of sufficient resources to pursue an effective investigation and escalate to an Inspector where there are insufficient resources.
- Inform the relevant R&P Inspector as soon as practicable to enable effective coordination of the Police response; particularly if a case is High Risk.
- Consider the need for an early media release where appropriate and advise corporate communications departments.
- Consider the use of [Child Rescue Alert](#) if the missing person is under 18 years of age, is reasonably believed to be in imminent danger of serious injury or death and that there is information to enable the public to assist the Police in finding them. It is the Senior Investigating Officer's (SIO) decision to implement Child Rescue Alert.



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- Sign off both parts of the risk assessment in the Missing Person report on Niche as soon as practicable.
- As soon as practicable, involve specialist Departments and partner organisations in the investigation; particularly where serious crime or terrorism is suspected.
- Review risk assessments as new information is received or circumstances change. See the guidance in the Reviews section **2.4.7.5**.
- Ensure that Current Situation reports contain sufficient information and clarity to allow for efficient handover to the next shift or to the Daily Management Meeting.
- Where the handover criteria is met, attend in person or ring into the District Daily Management Meeting (DMM) to summarise and hand over ownership of outstanding Missing Persons Investigations or brief the relevant Response and Patrol Inspector to discuss Investigations at the DMM.
- Fully brief the next duty Sergeant to ensure continuity of the investigation.

2.8.3. When the Missing Person returns or is found

- 2.8.3.1. Ensure that an officer completes a Prevention Interview in person in all Low, Medium and High Risk cases as soon as practicable. Guidance on conducting effective Return and Prevention interviews can be accessed [here](#).
- 2.8.3.2. Consider whether there is value in conducting a Prevention Interview in No Apparent Risk (Absent) cases.

A Prevention Interview will not routinely be conducted for No Apparent Risk (Absent) cases, however an assessment of the circumstances should be made to determine the value in speaking with the returning person.

- 2.8.4. Ensure that the content of the Return or Prevention Interview is recorded on the 'Return' tab in the RMS missing person report and that the Return screen is fully completed.
- 2.8.5. Take appropriate action if information is disclosed indicating that the person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.



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- 2.8.6. Ensure both parts of the risk assessment is signed off by the officer and a supervisor.
- 2.8.7. Sign the 'supervisor sign' box and tick the 'locked' box to close the missing person report.
- 2.8.8. Ensure cancellation of any media releases when a person returns or is located.

2.9. Second Line Supervision – Inspectors

2.9.1. The Inspector will:

- Receive a handover of all current Missing Persons within their area or responsibility at the start of each shift.
- Check the current assessment of risk, adjust if necessary and record any additional comments regarding risk levels on RMS.
- In **all** High Risk cases inform Force Silver and request a Detective Supervisor review as soon as practicable if required.
- Where the Missing Person is a child 14 and under, provide leadership in ensuring that, when appropriate, Investigatory or Specialist departments take action or a multi-agency response is initiated at the earliest practicable opportunity. Consider consulting Force Silver.
- Consider and facilitate the formation of the most appropriate command structure for managing the investigation
- Review the Current Situation Report (CSR) and the Sergeants immediate and longer-term investigation plan. See the guidance in the Reviews section **2.4.7.5**.
- Ensure that the appropriate actions are taken to locate the missing person

Approach reviews with an investigative mindset and with a fresh perspective. Document the review in the RMS occurrence.

- Manage the allocation of sufficient resources to pursue an effective investigation
- Consider the need for an early media release where appropriate and advise corporate communications departments
- Examine rationale for the use or otherwise of Child Rescue Alert



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- Consider which Police Force has responsibility for the investigation where enquiries are necessary in another Force area.

The police area that receives the report must record it and carry out all necessary initial actions, then consider where the majority of the enquiries are and who has the greatest opportunity of locating the missing person. Information relating to the transfer of Missing Person cases can be found [here](#).

- Ensure an effective handover to the next duty Inspector to ensure continuity of the investigation.
- Attend in person or ring into the District Daily Management Meeting (DMM) to discuss the handover of ownership of outstanding Missing Persons Investigations and agree the most appropriate resourcing balance.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, all staff involved in the investigation are briefed and debriefed.

2.10. Guidance of Detective Sergeant or Inspector

2.10.1. The purpose of each review is to:

- review the level of risk, including information from social care and other sources when appropriate
- check for any outstanding and incomplete actions
- quality assure actions already taken
- set new actions and enquiries in order to bring the investigation to a successful conclusion
- make recommendations about the management and ownership of the investigation
- Set future review date(s) as appropriate.

2.10.2. All of the aforementioned points should be recorded as policy decisions within the report. Examples of review checklists developed by police forces are available from the [MPB community](#) on [POLKA](#) (which is an OFFICIAL online tool with access limited to registered PNN and Gist users). These are suggested examples of good practice but their use is not mandatory.

2.11. Guidance for Force Silver

2.11.1. Consider whether this is a critical incident



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- 2.11.2. Examine the initial lines of enquiry in High Risk cases and review appropriate staffing levels.
- 2.11.3. Provide the command chain link between the R&P Inspector and the Gold Commander
- 2.11.4. Assess the available information and intelligence to properly evaluate the threat, vulnerabilities and risk
- 2.11.5. Ensure that all decisions made by Force Silver are documented in order to provide a clear audit trail
- 2.11.6. Consider the wider community, public safety and evidential implications of missing person investigations
- 2.11.7. Ensure that the deployment of resources is commensurate with the level of threat, harm and risk to the missing person
- 2.11.8. Ensure that threat and risk, and impact assessment(s) are completed where appropriate
- 2.11.9. Consider the need for operational parameters
- 2.11.10. Ensure a handover of the Silver Command responsibility is achieved – for example to the District Commander, the Duty SIO or another appropriate person.

2.12. District Daily Management Meeting (DDM)

- 2.12.1. Response and Patrol (R&P) will retain ownership and management of all low and medium Missing Persons (MISPER) Investigations for the first 24 hours.
- 2.12.2. Where these extend beyond 24 hours steps will be taken to move oversight and ownership to the next available 09:00 District Daily Management Meeting (DMM) for the District in which the missing person resides.
- 2.12.3. The R&P Sergeant or in exceptional circumstances a nominated representative will attend, or call into the 0900 District DMM to be able to summarise the circumstances and investigation so far, and answer any questions from the DMM chair. It is expected that Current Situation Reports and specific, prioritised actions are documented.
- 2.12.4. Transfer of ownership (from R&P to P&N) via the District DMM process will initially take place between Monday and Friday. There is a presumption that handover of ownership should still occur at weekends and bank holidays Transfer of ownership to District DMM will initially take place between Monday and Friday. There is a presumption that handover of ownership should still occur at weekends and bank holidays wherever possible and the appropriate supervision is available.



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- 2.12.5. District DMM will assume ownership of the management, coordination and resourcing of Low and Medium Risk MISPER Investigations. All High Risk cases will remain the responsibility of R&P unless handed to Investigations.
- 2.12.6. It is expected that Prevention and Neighbourhoods will in the first instance utilise neighbouring Senior District Management DMM and personnel to support ownership and resourcing of Missing Persons Investigations across the Force area.
- 2.12.7. The DMM will in the first instance direct that Prevention and Neighbourhoods (P&N) resources continue the investigation. The DMM should also consider utilising available Force resources from across all strands and specialisms to progress the investigation.
- 2.12.8. From the point of the handover, reviews will be completed by P&N supervisors, and the Investigation will be discussed at each subsequent DMM, unless handed to another Department.
- 2.12.9. The DMM chair will in agreement with the Response and Patrol (R&P) representative specify and communicate the point of the duty day at which R&P will reassume responsibility for undertaking investigative activity in the absence of there being any deployable P&N resources. The DMM Chair will confirm that the Current Situation Report and specific, prioritised actions are documented.
- 2.12.10. The chair should also consider whether Investigation command resources might be the most appropriate resource, dependent on the likely nature and extent of ongoing investigative work.
- 2.12.11. Subject to the above, the DMM Chair can agree with the R&P Inspector or Sergeant that R&P complete further enquiries for the Missing Person if appropriate and justified while DMM retain management oversight, responsibility for ongoing reviews, and return visits.
- 2.12.12. If at any point the reviewing P&N Supervisor concludes that the MISPER is at high risk, they must contact the Duty R&P Inspector immediately.
- 2.12.13. The DMM chair, P&N supervisors and staff should without undue delay request a review of the investigation by a Detective Inspector where it is suspected that the person is missing as a result of being a victim or suspect of crime or where they may have subsequently become a victim or suspect.
- 2.12.14. In any case, where the person has been missing for 7 days the DMM chair must refer the investigation for review by a Detective Inspector.



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2.13. Shared Responsibilities, Multi Agency Protocols and Preparing for Missing Incidents

2.13.1. Guidance is contained within the [APP](#).

2.13.2. Liaison with Care Settings

2.13.2.1. Neighbourhood policing teams are expected to develop and maintain a close working relationship with children's homes and other care settings in their area. This should include the following:

- Advising managers of their responsibilities around missing people in their care
- Identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns
- Gathering information and intelligence around vulnerable individuals to help address and prevent missing episodes
- Contributing their knowledge to resolving missing episodes
- Ensuring managers are aware of lessons learnt from previous missing incidents

2.13.2.2. In some cases the use of the [Herbert Protocol](#) should be considered, to help manage the risk the individual.

2.14. Guidance for MASH

2.14.1. Review cases referred to the MASH via Public Protection Notice 1 (PPN1) RMS Tasks created by officers or by the Missing and Exploited Team (MET) Coordinator.

2.14.2. Create Z Management occurrences in relation to any 'repeat missing person' (Missing at least three times in 90 days) or where there is a need for a greater safeguarding response.

An officer or MET Coordinator will create Tasks for MASH for referrals to Children's Services Department (CSD) where the missing person is under 18 and fits the 4LSCB protocol guidance for submission.

2.14.3. Conduct research into Missing persons and others identified as presenting a risk and provide MASH Supervisors with sufficient information to ensure effective multi-agency discussions with Partner organisations.

2.14.4. Notify the relevant District Prevention and Neighbourhood team or, if the Missing person is already at High Risk of Criminal or Sexual Exploitation the Missing, Exploited



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and Trafficked Team who will have responsibility for managing and mitigating identified risks.

2.15. Guidance for Missing and Exploited Persons Coordinator

- 2.15.1. Adopt a supporting role in High Risk cases where Missing and Exploited Team (MET) expertise may be of assistance but not become case officers for the investigation.
- 2.15.2. Act as a point of contact for partners to encourage the two-way exchange of information and liaise with other agencies to ensure that protocols are in place and are being applied by all parties.
- 2.15.3. Ensure that case details for Missing Persons who remain Missing after 72 hours have been communicated to Missing Person Bureau (MPB).
- 2.15.4. Ensure the MPB are notified without delay in High Risk cases.
- 2.15.5. Ensure MPB are notified of cancellations of cases within 24 hours of a force confirming the missing person's return or location, or as soon as practicable if this falls on a weekend.
- 2.15.6. Ensure that case details for all foreign nationals reported as missing in the UK (via INTERPOL or any other means) and UK residents reported as missing abroad have been communicated to Missing Person Bureau (MPB).

Notifications are primarily the responsibility of Investigating officers and supervisors but the MET Coordinator has a role in maintaining quality of service.

- 2.15.7. Ensure that appropriate referrals are made via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for repeat missing persons (the national guidance is 3 missing episodes in a rolling 90 day period); or where there is a need for a greater safeguarding response where these referrals have not already been made by MASH.
- 2.15.8. Quality-assure Record Management System (RMS) entries in relation to Missing Persons Investigations when requested.
- 2.15.9. Manage contact with reporting persons for No Apparent Risk cases for persons who have not returned after 72 hours have elapsed. Refer to a Missing and Exploited Team supervisor for a decision regarding whether there is sufficient Risk information to justify the person being categorised as Missing or to close the case where the person has not returned but there is no reason to be concerned for their safety.
- 2.15.10. Ensure a nominated Investigations supervisor completes a review of Long Term Missing Persons after twenty-eight days then 3, 6 and 12 months, then annually thereafter. See Long Term Missing.

2.16. Guidance on Immigration cases



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- 2.16.1. 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 deals with the report will depend on the circumstances of disappearance and level of risk. 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.

Consideration should be given to whether the individual is a victim of [modern slavery](#) or is being [exploited](#) or if there are any suspicious circumstances surrounding their disappearance. If this is the case, the Police may be the most suitable agency. If the person is intentionally missing and seeking to avoid immigration procedures or repatriation, Immigration may be the most suitable agency

2.17. Modern Day Slavery/Unaccompanied Children

- 2.17.1. Information relating to modern day slavery can be found [here](#).
- 2.17.2. Any child who is first 'discovered' in Hampshire as an unaccompanied child, for example from the rear of a lorry leaving a ferry port, will not be taken into custody. If necessary, Police Protection Powers will be used to ensure their safety
- 2.17.3. The child should be referred to Children's Services Department (CSD) in the area where they are found, either by Immigration or Border Force, or by the attending Police Officers
- 2.17.4. These children will be subject to a PPN/1, urgently tasked into the MASH
- 2.17.5. The MASH will grade the referral as an A, for investigation. A S47 Children's Act investigation will be launched by Children's Services Department (CSD), and the child will be subject to a joint Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Team /CSD visit, preferably within 24 hours of the referral.
- 2.17.6. The intention of the joint visit is to establish routes, possible suspects and other risk factors around the child to share via the International Liaison and Enquiry Team (ILET) to foreign law enforcement. Considerations include whether they are a victim of crime (Even if it happened in another country), or whether they have been trafficked.
- 2.17.7. If the information from the joint visit suggests that the child has been trafficked, a National Referral Mechanism should be submitted. It is only at this point a referral will go to the Independent Child Trafficking Advocate.
- 2.17.8. Unaccompanied children, and trafficked adults who subsequently go missing must be investigated as missing people, in accordance with this procedure.



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2.18. International Enquiries

2.18.1. All international enquiries must be completed through the International Liaison Enquiry Team. Further information can be found [here](#).

2.19. Guidance for 'Missing from Hospital Emergency Departments'

2.19.1. Assessments on whether to treat the patient as 'missing' or as a 'concern for welfare' should utilise the guidance featured in ['missing or concern for welfare'](#)

2.19.2. When establishing whether persons who leave Emergency Departments prior to discharge are in fact [No Apparent Risk, Missing](#) or [Concern for Welfare](#), it must be established what level of risk or concern was identified when the patient was triaged at the point of reception.

2.19.2.1. For example, if a patient leaves while awaiting treatment for a condition which if left untreated could result in serious harm or other risks have been identified since admission then they should be treated as Missing. If however patients choose to self-discharge while awaiting treatment for a minor injury, no other risks have been identified since admission and there is no information tending to raise risks in the possession of Police or others then it may be appropriate to record them as No Apparent Risk.

2.19.3. It is important to obtain full details of the individual's medical conditions, including the impact of not taking any medication, in order to make the risk assessment. Where relevant, advice should be sought from qualified medical staff on the likely outcomes of a vulnerable person not receiving treatment and their ability to look after themselves or to survive.

2.19.4. The police have a duty to find the person where they are at risk.

2.19.4.1. However, the hospital also has a duty to ensure the welfare of the individual, and should be expected to undertake reasonable enquiries (e.g. attempting to contact them and conduct a search of the hospital grounds) to establish their whereabouts and wellbeing before reporting them missing to the police. Where there is immediate risk of harm, police should not delay action to find the Missing Person.

2.20. Guidance for 'Missing from mental health facility'

2.20.1. This guidance relates to additional considerations for when people go missing from Psychiatric in Patient units, or other places of mental health care. It should be read in conjunction with the [APP](#). The [Force Mental Health pages](#) provide comprehensive guidance on Police Powers and also specific guidance around cross border missing patients, including the role that Hampshire Constabulary would play.



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- 2.20.2. The Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA) Code of Practice indicates that there are three situations that should always and immediately be reported to the police by healthcare services:
- patients subject to part 3 of the MHA 1983 – this means patients connected to criminal proceedings, either before or after trial or conviction
 - patients who have been assessed as being potentially dangerous
 - patients who may be particularly vulnerable.
- 2.20.3. “AWOL” and “absconder” are defined in the Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA) and relate to people who have absented themselves from care without permission in various scenarios. The legal status of each patient reported as missing must be verified as this will impact upon whether there are powers to recover them.
- 2.20.4. If someone is not detained, but the hospital are reporting concerns for them and do not know where they are then they would not normally fall into either category. In any of these cases, if their location is known these people are not “missing” and are not a Police responsibility. It is for the hospital to arrange their return (MHA Codes of Practice 28.6 and 28.14).
- 2.20.5. The police have a role in searching for missing people. However, expectations around AWOL patients outside of the scope of **2.18.1.** above should be considered on a case by case basis with reference to the [Missing Persons Operational Guidance](#).
- 2.20.6. Healthcare staff duties include:
- searching the hospital
 - providing Police with details of the status of the missing patient, specifically their legal status, whether they are an informal patient or detained under a particular section of the MHA (i.e. missing or missing and AWOL). This will include details of the expiry of the relevant section and what power exists to lawfully retake them.
 - providing a current risk assessment to Police on making the missing person report.
 - providing any available photographs of absent patients to assist the police in conducting Missing Persons investigations.
 - Further information is available on the [Force Mental Health Pages](#).
- 2.20.7. S.18 Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA) provides a Constable with a power to detain an AWOL patient and return them to the hospital. A person cannot be taken to a Police station or any other place under sec 18 MHA. This power also exists for an Approved



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mental Health Practitioner (AMPH), Hospital staff or authorised others such as possibly private ambulance staff.

- 2.20.8. Entry cannot be forced to premises for this purpose and a warrant under section 135(2) MHA is required if consent to enter premises is not provided, however entry can be considered under S.17 (1) (e) PACE if applicable; although this power will not apply in the vast majority of cases.
- 2.20.9. Other powers in law apply in certain specific circumstances. A comprehensive list can be found within the Force Mental Health pages.
- 2.20.10. **Police involvement when the missing person is found**
- 2.20.11. Where entry is required into private premises within the local area, the Mental Health Trust (MHT) or Hospital will obtain a warrant under Section 135(2) of the MHA. A Police officer must be present for this because only a Police Officer can legally execute the warrant.
- 2.20.12. Any conveyance back to hospital must be arranged by the hospital using suitable transport. This would usually be via ambulance, but in low risk situations the hospital will frequently use a taxi.
- 2.20.13. The only time that Police would become involved in returning patients would either be to support hospital staff if there was a risk of violence that they could not manage themselves or with the private ambulance staff or in relation to a warrant obtained under Section 135(2) of the MHA.
- 2.20.14. Any "mental health" missing person incident must be reviewed (MHA Codes of Practice) and the Force Mental Health team carry this role out.

2.21. **Guidance on Distinguishing 'Concern for Welfare' from 'Missing'**

- 2.21.1. If a report is received where there is 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 then this will be a 'fear for welfare'. If the concern for safety is due to disappearance or non-appearance then the appropriate category will be under 'missing persons'.
- 2.21.2. If the initial classification is assessed to be '[concern for welfare](#)' but subsequently turns out to be a missing person, the process for a missing person should be followed.
- 2.21.3. It is unacceptable to use the 'concern for welfare' categorisation to avoid a full missing person investigation. Any such action may leave a missing person at risk of harm.

2.22. **Persons Lost at Sea**



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- 2.22.1. Where a person has been reported lost at sea from a vessel travelling to or from a Port within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Contact Management will complete the standard risk assessment with the informant, grade the risk (Low, Medium, High), and deploy as necessary. The incident will be allocated a beat reference for the nearest land destination. Where there is doubt the beat location for the port of destination will be used.
- 2.22.2. High risk incidents will be retained within Contact Management until initial enquiries are exhausted. When closed by Contact Management the incident will be placed into RMS and the relevant R&P Officer assigned to continue the investigation.
- 2.22.3. The appointed R&P OIC must open and complete a Missing Person Report within the RMS occurrence.
- 2.22.4. Once initial R&P enquiries are complete the subsequent investigation will be the responsibility of the Investigation Team in the most relevant District to where the vessel was passing, its port of departure or its port of destination. A sensible and pragmatic view of ownership will be taken.
- 2.22.5. A Detective Inspector should review the investigation as soon as practicable and appoint an investigating officer from within the Investigation Command, and assess if the missing person was a victim of crime.
- 2.22.6. If the person is a Foreign or Commonwealth Citizen the relevant Embassy or High Commission should be informed immediately. This should be completed through the [International Police Liaison Enquiry Team \(ILET\)](#).
- 2.22.7. Where a vessel is travelling to or from another UK port, officers will ensure the details of the missing person are passed to the Home Office Police Force responsible for both ports.

2.23. [Guidance on 'Wanted' or 'Missing'](#)

- 2.23.1. 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)



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- 2.23.2. Evaluate each case on an individual basis and respond appropriately, according to the priority that should be given in that case

If a person is wanted for a minor matter but the missing persons risk assessment indicates a high risk, then it may be appropriate to deal with the case as a missing person's enquiry. Conversely a low risk missing person wanted for murder may be more appropriately dealt with as a wanted person.

- 2.23.3. When completing this risk assessment decision makers should consider both the risk to, and vulnerability of, the missing person and public, as well as the requirement to pursue the individual and detain them

- 2.23.4. Take the views of the reporting person into consideration.

The reporting person may be a source of information to assist in tracing the missing person, they may, however, be acting with dishonest motives. Balance the needs and risks of the investigation with the duty to keep people with a valid interest in the missing person updated on progress.

- 2.23.5. If a 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 as 'inactive' while a 'wanted' investigation continues.
- 2.23.6. In the case of a Missing child or Adult at Risk who is also 'wanted', they will be treated as a Missing Person in the first instance with their involvement in crime being regarded as a probable risk factor.

2.24. Found Persons

- 2.24.1. Where a person is discovered whose identity is unknown, enquiries must be made as soon as possible to establish the person's identity.
- 2.24.2. The appointment of an investigating officer to establish the person's identity and to assess if they were a victim of crime, abuse or neglect will be the responsibility of a nominated Detective supervisor as directed by DMM.
- 2.24.3. All such cases will be reviewed at the District Daily Management Meeting.

2.25. Found Bodies

- 2.25.1. Reports of found bodies will be managed in accordance with the Policy (01500) for Sudden Deaths, and the associated procedures.



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- 2.25.2. Full descriptive details of any found unidentified bodies or body parts must be sent via a PNC 12 to both PNC and the NCA Missing Persons Bureau within 48 hours of discovery of the body or body part.
- 2.25.3. All missing persons and unidentified bodies cases must be cancelled within 24 hours where they have either been traced or identified and next of kin informed.
- 2.25.4. The subsequent conduct of the investigation will be the responsibility of the senior CID officer designated and the course of investigation will depend upon the individual circumstances.

2.26. APP Guidance on 'Found People of Remains'

- 2.26.1. Responding effectively when a body or human remains are found is important as the individual may be the subject of a missing person report.
- 2.26.2. Until enquiries determine otherwise, where a body or remains of a missing person are found, the case should be treated as suspicious. Early engagement with the coroner is required, and the principles of an effective murder investigation should be adhered to until the case has been established to be non-suspicious. The coroner will then take primary responsibility for establishing the identity of the individual, with the police assisting enquiries.
- 2.26.3. When the deceased person has been identified their details should be circulated on the PNC. This PNC entry will enable police forces to relate any subsequent missing person report back to the deceased and inform the reporting person.
- 2.26.4. Where an unidentified body is found, details should be recorded and notified to Missing Persons Bureau (MPB) so that other forces are able to check their records of missing people.
- 2.26.5. Further information
 - 2.26.5.1. The MPB is available to provide specialist support when an unidentified person or remains have been found. The MPB acts as the central repository for these cases and maintains a national database, to facilitate matching of unidentified cases with outstanding missing persons reports.
 - 2.26.5.2. The MPB must be notified of all unidentified bodies, body parts and people within 48 hours.
 - 2.26.5.3. The MPB has developed the following resources:



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- [Identification Process – Good Practice: Procedural](#)
- [Advice for Police Officers and Staff Involved in the Identification Process](#)
- [Following the Discovery of Unidentified Bodies/Remains](#) (this includes information on how to conduct investigations into found bodies and body parts).

2.27. Long Term Missing Cases

- 2.27.1. The responsibility for completing reviews of Long Term Missing cases is held by the Investigation Command, and would ordinarily be undertaken by accredited Level 2 Investigators from the area in which the missing person report is held.
- 2.27.2. All Missing Person Investigations must be referred to a Detective Inspector for a review 28 days after the initial report has been taken. They should review all actions and ensure they have been completed or pending in accordance with their professional judgement.
- 2.27.3. Once they are satisfied that all necessary enquiries have been completed they should record a review on RMS, and the occurrence type changed to Missing – Long term.
- 2.27.4. A further review must be conducted by a Detective Inspector if the person remains missing after 90 and 180 days.
- 2.27.5. If the person remains missing after 180 days the Detective Inspector will ensure completeness of the investigation and outstanding lines of enquiry as far as practicable prior to transfer of responsibility to the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Team (METT). The Detective Inspector will also ensure that the next of kin or reporting agency are informed of the transfer to the METT team for all future contact.
- 2.27.6. After 180 days the responsibility for administering the appropriate review timetable for Long Term Missing (LTM) cases is passed to the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Team (METT).
- 2.27.7. The METT Detective Inspector will conduct a 180 day review and retain ownership of ongoing direction of the investigation. The METT Detective Inspector will also ensure that the next of kin or reporting agency are contacted and an agreement is reached regarding the timescales and means of future contact and updates.
- 2.27.8. Subsequent reviews will take place after 12 months and then annually thereafter.



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2.27.9. Consideration of any cold case review work will be made by the Serious Case Review Team, in consultation with the reviewing SIO.

2.28. Case Closure

2.28.1. It will not usually be appropriate for missing person cases to be closed without the individual being seen by the police or a relevant professional. It is important that the appropriate closing code (for command and control systems) is used to identify the incident as a missing person.

2.28.2. In circumstances where the missing person has been located, but it is impractical to see them owing to their present circumstances, e.g. they are abroad or are deliberately making themselves unavailable to police, the case can be closed provided that a member of the senior management team authorises this.

2.28.3. Not found

2.28.3.1. Where the missing person has not been found, the case must remain open and be the subject of review.

3. Administration

3.1. Administration associated with this Procedure is contained within **Section 2.5**.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

4.1. The strategic owner of this Procedure is the Public Protection Department Superintendent. The Missing & Exploited Team Detective Inspector will monitor compliance to and effectiveness of the Procedure through the Missing Coordination.

4.2. Group, comprising of Missing Person Officers & Coordinators and representatives of other key strands and Departments.

4.3. The Missing & Exploited Team Detective Inspector is responsible for ensuring that changes in the Police Authorised Professional Practice are reflected appropriately in this Procedure.

5. Other related policies, procedures and information sources

5.1. Related policies

- [21300](#) Health and Safety



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- [01500](#) Sudden Deaths
- [21700](#) Referral of Investigations to Major Crime
- [32400](#) Risk Management
- [01400](#) Contact Management and Control Room
- [26900](#) RMS (Record Management System) Use
- [29800](#) Police National Computer (PNC)
- [APP Search](#)

5.2. Related procedures

- [07511](#) Child Rescue Alert
- [01501](#) Coroners and Sudden Deaths
- [01505](#) Victim Recovery
- [32401](#) Risk Management
- [01405](#) Force Action Plans

5.3. Information sources

- [APP Missing Persons](#)
- [AD203 Equality Impact Assessment](#)

Origin: Public Protection Department