**Operational Procedure**

Icon

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Missing Persons** | | | |
| **DOR-OPr-062** | | | |
| **Version** | 1.0 | **Host Force** | Dorset Police |
| **Effective Date** | 20/07/2020 | **Host Policy Unit** | Dorset Legitimacy Team |
| **Version Date** | 05/09/2022 | **Policy Owner** | Superintendent – Local Policing |
| **Review Date** | 05/09/2023 | **Policy Author** | Inspector – Patrol |
| **Associated Policies** | DOR-P-049 – Missing Persons Policy | | |

**1. Operational Procedure Summary**

This operational procedure will set out clear information to inform operational practitioners and key internal stakeholders of their operational and tactical responsibilities regarding missing person investigations and missing person episodes. It will ensure that APP definitions are clearly followed and clear understanding of the four categories of missing episodes.

It will clearly reflect key specific responsibilities and strategic governance arrangements to ensure that key individuals are able to understand where and how they must operate during missing person investigations during investigations or interaction with partners through safeguarding processes and information sharing.

This operational procedure will define operational investigative actions to be taken at key investigative junctures. In short, officers and staff will be clearly aware of what is required of their role and what the Force expects of them.

**2. Contents List**

**1. Operational Procedure Summary**

**2. Contents List**

**3. Operational Procedure**

[**3.1** **Introduction** 3](#_Toc113270197)

[**3.2** **Definition and Risk Assessment** 4](#_Toc113270198)

[3.2.1 Definition 4](#_Toc113270199)

[3.2.2 Categories of Missing Person 5](#_Toc113270200)

[3.2.3 Force Response 5](#_Toc113270201)

[3.2.4 National Specialist Services 7](#_Toc113270202)

[3.2.5 Major and Critical Incidents 7](#_Toc113270203)

[**3.3** **Governance** 8](#_Toc113270204)

[3.3.1 Chief Constable 8](#_Toc113270205)

[3.3.2 Strategic Lead 8](#_Toc113270206)

[3.3.4 Missing Person Co-ordinator 8](#_Toc113270207)

[3.3.5 Line Managers 9](#_Toc113270208)

[3.3.6 Staff 9](#_Toc113270209)

[**3.4** **Specific Responsibilities** 9](#_Toc113270210)

[3.4.1 Initial Call Handler 9](#_Toc113270211)

[3.4.2 Force Command Centre (FCC) ‘Top Table’ 9](#_Toc113270212)

[3.4.3 Dispatcher 10](#_Toc113270213)

[3.4.4 Initial Investigating Officer 11](#_Toc113270214)

[3.4.5 Patrol Sergeant 11](#_Toc113270215)

[3.4.6 Patrol Inspectors and Missing Support Inspectors 12](#_Toc113270216)

[3.4.7 Officer in the Case (OIC) 13](#_Toc113270217)

[3.4.9 Review Responsibilities 14](#_Toc113270218)

[3.4.10 Detective Inspector Review 15](#_Toc113270219)

[3.4.11 Daily Tasking Meeting 16](#_Toc113270220)

[3.4.12 Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities 17](#_Toc113270221)

[**3.5** **Investigation** 17](#_Toc113270222)

[**3.6** **Search** 19](#_Toc113270223)

[3.6.1 Police Search Advisor (PoISA) 19](#_Toc113270224)

[3.6.2 Lost Person Search Manager (LPSM) 21](#_Toc113270225)

[3.6.3 Tasking and Review 22](#_Toc113270226)

[3.6.4 Extended Search Operations 23](#_Toc113270227)

[3.6.5 Management and Use of Community Volunteer Searchers 24](#_Toc113270228)

[**3.7** **Media** 26](#_Toc113270229)

[**3.8** **Family Support including Family Liaison Officers** 26](#_Toc113270230)

[**3.9** **Harm Reduction** 27](#_Toc113270231)

[3.9.1 APP Requirements 27](#_Toc113270232)

[3.9.2 Public Protection Notices (PPNs) 27](#_Toc113270233)

[3.9.3 The Adoption of Repeat Missing Persons for Management 27](#_Toc113270234)

[3.9.4 IMPACT – To be removed as Impact will no longer exist 28](#_Toc113270235)

[3.9.5 Philomena Protocol 28](#_Toc113270236)

[3.9.6 Neighbourhood Policing (NP) 29](#_Toc113270237)

[3.9.7 The Multi-Agency Response 29](#_Toc113270238)

[**3.10** **Long-Term Cases** 30](#_Toc113270239)

[3.10.1 Dorset Police Local Variation 31](#_Toc113270240)

[**3.11** **Cross Border Cases** 32](#_Toc113270241)

[3.11.1 Out of Force Requests 32](#_Toc113270242)

[**3.12** **Learning/Debriefing** 33](#_Toc113270243)

**4. Monitoring and Review**

**5. Associated Documents**

**6. Document History**

**7. Version History**

[**Appendix A – Missing Persons Process Document** 36](#_Toc113270244)

**3. Operational Procedure**

# **Introduction**

The College of Policing (CoP) Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Major Investigation and Public Protection Missing Persons module details the procedures to be followed in all reports of missing people, both adults and children

* [**APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing Persons**](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons)

Dorset Police will follow APP in its response to all incidents of people being reported missing. This procedure document will detail any variation in the force response from APP and local interpretation, with hyperlinks to relevant APP sections. APP must be referred to alongside this procedure by all persons providing the initial response to missing person reports, or conducting or reviewing missing person investigations.

Dorset Police will focus on the three key objectives for missing person investigations outlined in APP:

* Protecting those at risk of harm
* Minimising distress and ensuring high quality of service to the families and carers of missing persons
* Prosecuting those who perpetrate harm or pose a risk of harm when this is appropriate and supported by evidence

In order to deliver these key objectives Dorset Police will:

* Adopt a proactive multi-agency approach to missing people in order to reduce the potential for harm, including through repeat missing episodes.
* Risk assess every report of a missing person to ensure those who may be vulnerable or represent high risk are identified and that a proportionate response is initiated.
* Effectively and efficiently investigate reports of missing persons ensuring that evidence is preserved where a crime has been committed; actively prosecuting those who perpetrate harm or pose a risk of harm.
* Have clear procedures in place which describe organisational roles and responsibilities in response to reports of missing persons.
* Ensure our workforce is adequately trained to investigate missing persons’ cases.
* Support the needs of the missing persons family and friends and the local community.

# **Definition and Risk Assessment**

## **Definition**

The College of Policing APP definition of ‘missing’ is:

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

It is acknowledged that this definition is intentionally broad. Upon receipt of a concern for the welfare of a person, whether or not to categorise them as missing is a decision for the police.

Whether it can be said that the person’s whereabouts cannot be established is necessarily a subjective decision that will take account of all the circumstances, including what obvious lines of enquiries have and have not been undertaken prior to reporting the matter to the police and an assessment of associated vulnerabilities, including any time factors. It is important to be clear whether the person reporting a concern for welfare considers the individual to be ‘missing’ and, if so, why; the response will be documented and taken into account in the police decision.

APP outlines that reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk, from ‘no apparent risk’ through to high-risk cases that usually require immediate, intensive action.

Once a decision is made that the person is missing, and a missing person report is created the Police assume a duty of care.

* **APP > Major investigation and Public Protection >** [**Missing Persons**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/) **> Definition of missing**

## **Categories of Missing Person**

The Police Search Management Manual is produced by the Police National Search Centre (PNSC) for Police Search Advisors (PolSAs). Volume 2 of this manual deals with searches for missing people and outlines four categories:

1. Lost persons – those who are temporarily disorientated and would wish to be found, e.g., people who have gone walking and do not know where they are
2. Missing voluntarily – those who have control over their actions and have decided on a course of action e.g., they wish to leave home
3. Missing ill or injured – those who do not want to be missing, but have suffered some injury or illness that has resulted in them not completing a journey and subsequently being reported as missing
4. Missing under the influence of a third party against their will, e.g., abduction or murder

Determining the hypotheses, i.e., the categories that may apply given the information that is known, is vital as it supports decisions on priority actions as part of the initial and ongoing investigation and any associated search strategy. Reaching a hypothesis is a separate process to conducting a risk assessment. The risk level to be applied will be determined using the NDM. Both the determined hypothesis and the risk grading must be kept subject to regular review throughout the investigation.

## **Force Response**

The force response will be proportionate to the initial and on-going assessment of risk throughout the investigation, which will be guided by the College of Policing [risk principles](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/risk-2/?s=), [National Decision Model (NDM)](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/?s=) and the [Code of Ethics](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Documents/Code_of_Ethics.pdf).

* **APP > Major investigation and Public Protection >** [**Missing Persons**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/) **>** [**Risk assessment**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/risk-assessment/)**.**

This includes the risk assessment table and a missing persons process chart to enable easy visualisation of the APP expectations from initial contact, first repose and subsequent investigation using the continuum of risk.

In determining whether to record someone as a missing person and deciding the level of risk the following specific considerations will be applied:

* The APP Missing Person Risk Table refers to someone as being ‘Absent’ when ‘a person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk’. **\*\*\* Dorset Police does not use this category within the missing module on Niche \*\*\***. If a person is not currently where they are expected to be but it is anticipated that they will return within a reasonable time and they are not identified as being at risk of significant harm before they do, then it may be concluded that they are not missing at that time, or they may be deemed to be Missing, but assessed as Low Risk.
* If not recorded as missing, consideration will be given, based on an assessment of the circumstances, as to what action should be taken and by whom to confirm the person’s welfare and when and how the situation will be reviewed. This will be agreed with the person making the report and must be documented.
* If a person is deemed to be missing, but there are no identified vulnerabilities, they will be assessed as low risk. In determining a proportionate response in low risk cases, consideration will be given to the need to balance the police duty of care with the person’s rights and freedoms under the Human Rights Act 1998, which may include removing themselves from the place they would ordinarily be expected to be and not wanting to be found.
* Any person who is under 18 and it is not known whether or when they might return and whose whereabouts cannot be established, will be considered vulnerable, at least by virtue of their age, unless otherwise agreed and documented through a multi-agency management process. They will be recorded as a missing person and will not be assessed as low risk. An assessment of additional vulnerability factors will determine the proportionate investigative response.
* Specific consideration will be given to those who are vulnerable due to a medical or mental health issue and how their condition, or lack of access to essential medication, may affect their behaviour in the context of the circumstances of them going missing.
* There are additional resources available through the National Crime Agency (NCA) to support certain high-risk cases. In cases where a person’s mental health condition is believed to be profoundly affecting their behaviour, the advice of a Forensic Psychologist (FCP) may be sought. An FCP provides specialist advice regarding an offender or suspect through the application of their substantial clinical experience in the assessment and evaluation of serious crime and mentally ill offenders. Their advice can include risk assessment, interview strategy, advice on media appeals and the evaluation of unknown offenders’ behaviour in conjunction with behavioural intelligence analysis. Whilst missing people are not generally crime offenders or suspects, many of the considerations will be transferable. Access to an FCP is through the NCA - Major Crime Investigative Support - 0370 496 7622.

One of the fundamental facts to be determined in a missing person investigation is the reason why the subject has disappeared. In cases where the circumstances are suspicious or are unexplained, use the maxim:

**IF IN DOUBT, THINK MURDER**

Failure to apply such thinking in past cases has led to the loss of valuable investigative opportunities. This can ultimately result in failure to trace the missing person or to establish sufficient evidence to convict a perpetrator.

* [NCA Major Crime Investigative Support](https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/how-we-work/providing-specialist-capabilities-for-law-enforcement/major-crime-investigative-support)

## **National Specialist Services**

Wider national specialist services are available to provide advice and support to the police during a missing person investigation as referenced in APP.

* [APP > Major investigation and public protection > Missing Persons > National Specialist Support and Services](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons)

## **Major and Critical Incidents**

Upon a missing person report, a FIM may declare that person High Risk. APP suggests that a missing person critical incident is different from other incidents and will require additional considerations because the nature of the investigation is likely to generate public interest over a number of days and may trigger a community search effort.

In addition, any officer at any time during a missing investigation may declare and raise the risk the individual to High.

The initial response will be managed by the FIM. The force will then at an agreed time and point in the investigation move to a geographical command structure. A Silver commander will be nominated, usually a Chief Inspector to manage the ongoing investigation.

Guidance on management of community search is provided in this policy.

Force Policy on managing critical incidents can be found here:

* [Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedure](http://dpintranet/Force%20Document%20Library/Force%20Document%20Library%20Overvie/Force%20Document%20Library/Policy%20and%20Procedure%20Docs/Critical%20Incident%20Management%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.doc)

# **Governance**

## **Chief Constable**

The Chief Constable is ultimately accountable for ensuring an effective force response to missing people.

## **Strategic Lead**

The force strategic lead is responsible for leading a co-ordinated response to missing people, recognising the interdependency with wider partnership responses to vulnerability and safeguarding.

They must ensure that an effective and deliverable force policy and achievable working practices are in place to deliver against the identified key objectives and which outlines clear lines of ownership and accountability through the delineation of roles and responsibilities. To support this, they will ensure that performance data is available to inform the police and partner response and that there is an effective process in place to identify and respond to national and local learning.

* + 1. **Tactical Lead**

The tactical force lead is responsible for co-ordinating cross-departmental/functional business development to ensure that force processes remain fit for purpose to

deliver against the key objectives and in response to national and local learning.

## **Missing Person Co-ordinator**

The police Missing Persons Coordinator role is vital in supporting multi-agency working. They underpin understanding the risks associated with missing people, both as an individual missing person, but also the risk and demand that missing people place on the force.

The Missing Person Coordinator role helps to ensure that forces respond effectively and are able to undertake relevant safeguarding responsibilities in relation to missing reports. It is, therefore, important that chief officers ensure that a coordinator, or someone performing this function, is present in all police forces.

The role of the missing person coordinator is to:

* collate information relating to missing reports to identify indicators or patterns of absence which raise concern that the individual may be at risk
* identify safeguarding priorities/considerations
* assist in the independent oversight of cases at force and/or local level
* act as a point of contact for partners, and ensure an effective working relationship is maintained, encouraging the two-way exchange of information
* liaise with other agencies and care providers to ensure that protocols are in place and are being applied by all parties
* assist the force to understand the nature of risk and demand associated with missing people.

Missing person coordinators should ensure proactive engagement occurs with care homes and healthcare establishments to help promote a better understanding of the role of the police in missing person cases. They can also help to identify potential issues and risks surrounding missing persons at an early stage. This work may be complemented by neighbourhood policing.

The coordinator should **not** be involved in investigating cases.

## **Line Managers**

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that staff involved in the response to reports of missing people, whether in relation to the investigation or safeguarding activity once the missing person is located to reduce ongoing vulnerability, are aware of and comply with APP and this operational procedure.

## **Staff**

All officers and members of police staff involved in the response to reports of missing people have individual responsibility to be aware of the contents of APP and this working practice and to highlight barriers to compliance through line management.

# **Specific Responsibilities**

## **Initial Call Handler**

The initial call taker is responsible for creation of a STORM log and completion of the Initial Risk Assessment questions and missing person record on NICHE. Correct classification and recording of incidents is important to ensure the most appropriate resources are deployed.

* [**APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing Persons > Quick Reference Guide > Call handlers**](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-persons-quick-reference-guides/call-handlers)

The call-taker will follow the [Missing Person Process Document](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Prevention%20Department/MissingPeople/Shared%20Documents/MISSING%20PERSON%20PROCESS%20DOCUMENT%2001052020.pdf), Where the initial call-taker believes that the incident may warrant a high-risk response, or this is identified from an initial risk-assessment call-back, the FIM must immediately be notified.

## **Force Command Centre (FCC) ‘Top Table’**

The ‘Top Table’ Force Incident Manager (FIM), Deployment Manager (DM) or Supervisor will follow the [Missing Person Process Document](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Prevention%20Department/MissingPeople/Shared%20Documents/MISSING%20PERSON%20PROCESS%20DOCUMENT%2001052020.pdf), and reviewing the incident; confirming categorisation as a missing person incident; applying a high/medium/low risk status in line with APP definitions (based on all available relevant information); and setting proportionate priority actions based on the individual circumstances of the missing episode.

* [**APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing Persons > Risk Assessment > Gathering information**](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-persons-risk-assessment)

APP provides access to a guide to support decision-making:

* [APP Decision Making Guide](https://www.college.police.uk/app/national-decision-model/national-decision-model)

The FIM will be accountable for the force response to the missing person incident until such time as the Initial Investigating Officer is at scene and has completed the primary investigation.

In high-risk cases, the FIM will initially assume the role of Silver (Tactical) Commander and functional Bronze Commanders will be appointed as appropriate to the circumstances. The duty Superintendent should be notified by the FIM at a point that the investigation becomes protracted, it is declared a critical incident, or mobilisation of resources not on duty required. The decision to notify force gold will rest with the duty Superintendent.

## **Dispatcher**

The dispatcher’s responsibilities are to ensure that units are deployed in line with the principles of Deployment Policy considering level of risk. The FCC also need to observe the [Call handling, Grading and Deployment Operational Procedure](http://dpintranet/Force%20Document%20Library/Force%20Document%20Library%20Overvie/Force%20Document%20Library/Policy%20and%20Procedure%20Docs/Call%20Handling,%20Grading%20and%20Deployment%20Operational%20Procedure.pdf), which makes reference to missing person investigations and more specifically high risk and cases involving children.

The dispatcher is also responsible for ensuring that the initial priority actions are communicated to the assigned unit. Critically, the dispatcher must bring to the attention of the top table if they are unable to dispatch an officer to conduct the primary investigation to meet deployment times so that alternative resourcing options can be considered.

The dispatcher will ‘liaise’ with the Patrol Inspector once an officer has arrived at the scene to conduct the primary investigation and, if agreed that there are no further command and control requirements at that time, the STORM log will be closed and the Patrol Inspector will be allocated the investigation occurrence for review via the force records management system, Niche RMS.

Allocation will be via the Niche RMS Managing Unit field. The field will be updated to the geographic LPA Shift Inspector managing unit and this will be reflected on their “whiteboard”. This will be overseen by the Patrol Inspector but they will be supported by other “relevant Inspectors” who are on duty at any given time. This would primarily be the Missing Person Support team Inspector on weekday hours, or Duty Support Inspector in weekday 1400 – 2200 hrs and weekends 0800 – 2200 hours.

Command protocols must be followed by the Inspectors, so it is clear who has ownership of an investigation at any one time. Best practice will be to update the OEL.

## **Initial Investigating Officer**

The officer attending the initial report of a missing person must establish and accurately record the facts and complete a risk assessment in line with APP. An initial visual check should be undertaken of the Place Last Seen (PLS) or Last Known Position (LKP). A Police Protection Notice (PPN) must always be submitted by attending officer/s for incidents involving young people, adults at risk or where any other safeguarding concerns have been identified which will be automatically sent to Safeguarding Referral Unit (SRU) for assessment. All actions undertaken in the initial response must be recorded on NICHE, using the OIC 1 as a template.[**OIC 1 template**](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/MISSING%20PERSONS%20OIC.%201%20TEMPLATE.docx)

* **APP> Major investigation and Public Protection>**[**Missing Persons**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/) **>**[**Missing person investigations**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/)**>first officer to attend**
* **APP>> Major investigation and Public Protection>Missing persons>**[**Quick reference guide**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/quick-reference-guides/)**>initial response and investigation**

## **Patrol Sergeant**

The Patrol Sergeant will actively supervise the progress of the missing person investigation. They will ensure that it is appropriately resourced, raising any concerns to the Patrol Inspector or FIM if the Patrol Inspector is unavailable. They will satisfy themselves of the effectiveness of the primary investigation and confirm the risk assessment with the Initial Investigating Officer. Once so satisfied they will make direct contact with the Patrol Inspector to notify them of the requirement for an Inspector level review. That Patrol Inspector will look to liaise with the Missing Support Inspectors if on duty for them to undertake an Inspector review. Outside of the Missing Support Inspectors being on duty or not having the capacity to conduct a review this will fall to the Patrol Inspector or their support on weekday and weekend days and lates duty Inspector.

As per APP, the initial supervision should be by sergeants and inspectors. Their responsibilities are as follows:

* The officer’s assessment of risk should be checked, verified and recorded on the appropriate form. In high-risk cases, supervision should be immediate, in all other cases this should be done as soon as practicable.
* Supervisors must ensure that the appropriate actions are taken to locate the missing person without delay.
* Consider the need for an early media release where appropriate and advise corporate communications departments. If the missing person is under 18 years of age and potentially at significant risk of harm, consider the use of [Child Rescue Alert](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/specific-investigations). This link is accessed via the Managed Learning Environment.
* Consideration should be given to involving a detective, police search adviser, senior management team and child-specific services. This is particularly important where serious crime or terrorism is suspected.
* Consideration must be given to the allocation of sufficient resources to pursue an effective investigation.
* Consider the need for a multi-agency response involving partner organisations in the investigation.

An immediate and longer-term investigation plan may be set by a supervisor or investigating officer. Any plan should take account of staffing levels and must be recorded. Such entries must be timed, dated and signed by the supervisor.

The investigation plan should document the risk assessment guiding the actions being set and any hypotheses. Supervisors must ensure these are revisited as new information is received or circumstances change.

The next duty supervisor must be fully briefed to ensure continuity of the investigation. The owning Inspector should monitor missing person investigations, ensuring that they are being managed effectively with appropriate levels of resources.

Further, Sergeants will ensure that a comprehensive and effective handover takes

place between shifts, including between the patrol sergeant and nominated OICs, to ensure ongoing effective supervision and progression of the investigation and ensure that ongoing arrangements are in place for the family/informant to be kept updated.

Where is it considered that the risk level may have changed, they will bring it to the attention of the relevant Inspector for further review.

In higher risk cases where a dedicated command structure is implemented, the Patrol Sergeant may be required to fulfil a bronze role for the missing person investigation which may include search management activity pending a decision to appoint a search manager.

* **APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing persons >** [**Quick reference guide**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/quick-reference-guides/) **> supervisory responsibilities**

## **Patrol Inspectors and Missing Support Inspectors**

The Patrol Inspector will assume NICHE Managing Unit responsibility for all missing person reports following the attendance of the Initial Investigating Officer and completion of the primary investigation as they have line management responsibility to LPA policing patrol officer and operate on a 24/7 shift pattern. They will undertake reviews of missing persons each shift, i.e., earlies, lates and nights.

The review will follow APP guidance [**APP missing person review**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/quick-reference-guides/quick-reference-guide-reviewing-officers/)

However, they will also have supervisory responsibility for their LPA NICHE Missing Persons whiteboard. The FCC must inform the patrol Inspector when a missing investigation has been assigned to that niche whiteboard. Although ownership of the missing person investigation remains with the Patrol Inspector because of their 24/7 Inspectorate cover, the LPA Missing Support Team Inspectors, whilst on duty will actively assume the responsibility of reviews in support of the Patrol Inspector, once the OIC 1 investigation has been completed and updated on the relevant Niche occurrence. The MST Inspector will ensure that command protocols are discussed between the relevant Patrol Inspector and themselves to ensure clear understanding of ownership and they will reflect this on the relevant occurrence.

In completing their review, the relevant Inspector will quality assure the primary investigation and confirm the risk level. The Inspector will set investigative actions and task these to the geographic Sergeant to own and deploy resources.

Reviews will be undertaken in line with APP direction namely: set the latest time to review the risk assessment and activity, based on the circumstances of the report. The reasoning for this time frame should be clearly documented and the informant advised. The review may take place before the latest time if new information comes to light.

The Patrol Inspector will retain ownership of the missing person investigation.

* [**APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing persons > Quick reference guide > supervisory responsibilities**](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-persons-quick-reference-guides/supervisors-and-first-line-managers)

## **Officer in the Case (OIC)**

The appointed OIC may not always be the Initial Investigating Officer. The OIC must agree an investigation plan with supervisors, prioritise tasks, update NICHE and ensure any information potentially impacting on the risk level is referred to supervisors for reassessment. They must also research any previous missing episodes, review any trigger plans in place and, where appropriate, share information with partner agencies. An OIC must be appointed for all missing person investigations and the allocation and handover must be recorded on NICHE to demonstrate ownership at all phases of the investigation. It is recognised that many missing person investigations will require handover between OICs and supervisors shift to shift; therefore, they will be allocated to the geographic Duty Sergeants NICHE in-box.

* [**APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing persons > Quick reference guide > Missing person coordinator**](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-persons-quick-reference-guides/missing-person-coordinator)

**3.4.8 Missing Support Teams**

The Missing Support Teams will be geographically based teams comprising a dedicated Inspector, Sergeants, and uniformed and desk-based Constables responsible to the LPA Patrol Chief Inspector. They will operate closely with the Missing Person Coordinator.

They are a proactive unit that will professionalise the policing response to missing person episodes in support of front line policing assets, who are governed by command and control real time incidents, which impact on availability at times of peak demand.

It will support front-line resources during core hours of demand and improve the flow of partnership information, vital in longer term problem solving regarding repeat and vulnerable missing episodes:

The MST will primarily focus on:

* High risk missing episodes
* Under 18’s (Juveniles) and repeat vulnerable adults
* Back office support to all other medium risk missing investigations

In order to:

* Locate missing people more quickly, and therefore safeguarding them at the earliest opportunity
* Conduct problems solving and intelligence garnering prevention interviews (PI’s) and ensure that quality public protection notices are shared with key partner stakeholders through the MASH.
* Aim to understand the reasons why the subject went missing and consider prevention and diversion opportunities working with partners
* Develop a closer working operational relationship with key care providers to enable them to identify opportunities for improvements in their own service

delivery

* Enhance the local policing response to missing person episodes through a learning culture which shares best practice and timely points of learning.
* Where crime is identified during their activities, they will not be responsible for the ongoing investigational aspects as this will fall to territorial policing. They will however ensure that all immediate safeguarding and primary investigation material is considered prior to handover to patrol.

## **Review Responsibilities**

The missing person process demands an effective supervisory and management of risk regime is in place. Regular reviews must be carried out throughout the investigation. Review ownership and responsibility is determined by the NICHE Managing Unit and identifiable from the Missing Person NICHE whiteboard.

The review will follow APP guidance [APP Missing Person Review](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/quick-reference-guides/quick-reference-guide-reviewing-officers/) Process

When on duty, the Missing Support Inspector is responsible for the first review following completion of the primary investigation, but outside of their operation hours or capacity, this responsibility will fall to the Patrol Inspector or their duty support Inspector on weekday lates and weekend days and lates. They will undertake reviews during each duty shift, i.e., earlies, lates and nights. They will adhere to the [Missing Person Process Document](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Prevention%20Department/MissingPeople/Shared%20Documents/MISSING%20PERSON%20PROCESS%20DOCUMENT%2001052020.pdf).

The purpose of the Inspector review is the same as that defined in the Detective Inspector review section below.

The reviewing officer is responsible for ensuring that there is a clearly documented audit trail of actions taken and those not taken, with rationale where appropriate. In high risk or more complex medium risk cases, early consideration will be given to implementation of an actions management system and, where considered necessary, the appointment of an actions manager.

## **Detective Inspector Review**

The Managing Unit Inspector (or Silver Commander in high-risk cases) may request a DI review at any time if considered appropriate, based on the context or complexity of an active investigation.

However, specific consideration will be given to a DI review of missing person investigations in line with the following timescales:

* High-risk cases – as soon as possible
* All other cases – no later than 48 hours after the report is made to the Police.

It is for the Inspector with Managing Unit responsibility (or Silver Commander in high-risk cases) to decide when to task a DI review as a proportionate approach to threat, harm and risk.

Consideration will be given to tasking a further DI review 14-days from the date of the initial review. It is preferable the same DI conducts the review, unless to achieve this will result in an unnecessary delay. Any decision not to task a DI review within the timescales outlined above will be recorded and rationale provided.

APP outlines the purpose of the detective supervisor (Inspector-level) review:

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

An additional overarching requirement is for the DI to assess and record at the time of their review whether a crime is suspected.

During the period of the DI review, the Patrol Inspector retains responsibility for the investigation as the NICHE Managing Unit.

**How to task a DI review**

* The requirement for DI review will be added to the daily crime meeting (DCM) document via the Intel Portal for allocation at the morning daily meeting. If more urgent and in high-risk cases, direct contact will be made with the designated Duty DI.
* A Duty DI is available 24 hours a day. On Call details can be found GRS.

* The reviewing DI will use the template 'Inspector - Missing Person Subsequent Review' to record their review which will be saved on Niche.
* **APP> Major investigation and Public Protection>Missing persons>**[Quick reference guide](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/quick-reference-guides/)**>reviewing officers**
* **APP> Major investigation and Public Protection>Missing persons>** [Missing person investigations](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/)**>the missing person case review process**

## **Daily Tasking Meeting**

APP requires that appropriate cases are reviewed at a Daily Tasking Meeting.

* **APP> Major investigation and Public Protection>Missing persons>** [Daily Tasking Meeting](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/)**>DTM Role**

The force level Daily Tasking Meeting (DTM) will consider all high-risk missing cases and also individuals that are under 18 to ensure proper ownership and drive.

All high-risk cases will be raised by the FIM for review to determine the level of resource and supervision required. In more complex high-risk cases that have progressed beyond the primary investigation and response phase, the DTM chair will give consideration to the appointment of a dedicated command structure. Where necessary ahead of the next DTM, a decision on the appointment of a dedicated command structure can be sought through the duty Superintendent or LPA SLT leads.

The decision whether or not to implement a dedicated command structure should be clearly documented on the STORM log.

The FIM/ Patrol Inspector/ MST / Duty Inspector will also consider raising medium risk cases at the DTM where:

* There is concern about the potential for an escalation in the risk level
* There is potential for a rise in community tension or a risk to community confidence
* The related enquiries are having a significant impact on local resources and force level co-ordination is required
* There is a requirement for a coordinated cross-departmental response
* Service failures by partner agencies are a barrier to effective progression and risk management
* Inspector level review capacity is exceeded based on the number of current cases

## **Senior Leadership Team Responsibilities**

The Chief Inspector line manager of the ‘owning’ Inspector (identified from NICHE whiteboard Managing Unit) has overarching responsibility to ensure that missing person investigation reviews are being conducted within specified timescales and in line with policy. They will consider reallocation where the owning Inspector is not available to fulfil their responsibilities, or their capacity is exceeded. They will provide an additional mechanism outside of the DTM process for escalation by the owning Inspector where additional support or resources are required – usually in longer term cases.

Where a dedicated command structure is deemed necessary, a Senior Leadership Team member may be allocated Silver/Gold level responsibilities. Whether this is the LPA, Crime or combined command structure will depend on the specific circumstances of each case and will be agreed and documented.

Out of hours, the decision for a command structure will sit the duty Superintendent, who must be informed and consider resourcing.

* **APP> Major investigation and Public Protection>Missing persons>**[Senior Management Team](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/)**>SMT responsibilities**

# **Investigation**

APP requires the following minimum actions to be taken in all missing person cases:

* Create a record on the force command and control system and/or the force missing person reporting system
* Complete a risk assessment and use this to inform what action will be taken and when
* Create and record a plan of immediate action
* Set the latest time to review the risk assessment and activity, based on the circumstances of the report
* If the missing person is under 18, local children’s services must be notified (immediately if deemed to be high risk)

An investigation starts at the first point of contact with the police. In missing person cases every possible reason for absence should be considered and all of the possible risks to the missing person identified and continually assessed to minimise the risk of harm.

The assessment of the level of risk will inform the police response and, therefore, the direction an investigation will take.

Care must be taken not to confuse actions directed/taken from reviews documented as part of the investigation on a Niche occurrence log and those being directed via the STORM log as part of a command and control process of resource allocation. The emphasis will be on closure of the STORM log at the earliest appropriate opportunity. This will usually be once an officer has arrived at the scene to commence the primary investigation unless there is a need for the STORM log to remain open to manage the simultaneous deployment of resources to priority actions, such as search activity, in higher risk cases. In line with APP (Authorised Professional Practice) if, during the course of an investigation, it is deemed that the case is to develop into a major enquiry, consideration would be given to moving the incident record to the relevant case management system (e.g., HOLMES – Home Office Large Major Enquiry system) with reference to Major Investigation and Public Protection APP).

Investigators must consider the potential link to serious offences e.g., domestic abuse, honour-based abuse, child abuse, forced marriage, modern slavery, human trafficking, exploitation, abduction or homicide.

APP provides information to aid the investigation based on the vulnerability of the individual and the circumstances in which they are missing:

* [APP Specific Investigations](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/specific-investigations/)

Where there is information to suggest a potential crime link, the FIM/ Patrol Inspector must be informed immediately, and consideration will be given to the appointment of an SIO as part of a formalised command structure working to an agreed documented command protocol which must be documented.

A missing person investigation does not stop when the person is located or returns. An effective return interview is an integral part of the investigation. There is a need to understand the reason why the person went missing and what might have prevented it. The investigation cannot conclude until the circumstances have been fully explored and appropriate safeguarding or preventative measures have been put in place. Detailed information must be recorded on the ‘return’ section of the missing person report. If there are safeguarding concerns the officer must take the appropriate action at the time and complete a Public Protection Notice (PPN).

* **APP> Major investigation and Public Protection>Missing persons>**[**Missing Person investigations**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/)
* **APP> Major investigation and Public Protection>Missing persons>**[**Specific Investigations**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/specific-investigations/)
* **APP>**[**Critical incident management**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/critical-incident-management/?s=)

# **Search**

The term Search refers to the physical searching of urban and rural land areas, maritime areas, inland bodies of water, buildings or vehicles for a missing person by:

* Level 1 search trained Police officers
* Level 2&3 search trained Police officers (LSO- Licensed Search Officers and specialist units)
* Police dogs
* Police aerial platforms such as NPAS and drones
* Other emergency services such as fire & rescue or coastguard
* Trained/ professional volunteer agencies such as DorSAR & Mountain Rescue teams
* Community Volunteers Searchers

It should be noted that in the UK the Police hold primacy for all land-based search and rescue (SAR) and HM Coastguard maintain primacy for all maritime SAR with the boundary being the mean high tide coastal mark.

The Alliance Search Operations Policy SA043 outlines the Alliance search response to missing people. It provides guidance on the capabilities and skills of a Police Search Coordinator (PolSC), Police Search Advisor (PolSA), Lost Person Search Manager (LPSM) and Licensed Search Officers (LSOs) and operational deployment considerations.

* [SA043 'Alliance Search Operations Policy'](http://dpintranet/Force%20Document%20Library/Force%20Document%20Library%20Overvie/Force%20Document%20Library/Policy%20and%20Procedure%20Docs/Police%20Search%20Operations%20Policy.pdf#search=sa043)

DW87 is the working practice for Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, detailing the capability and responses from SAR partners in the South-West region.

* [DW87 ‘SAR policy’](file:///W:\INTERGRP\Missing%20Persons\DW87%20Search%20and%20Rescue%20(SAR)%20v1.3%20-%20(2).doc)

In addition, there is a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place to describe the relationship between Dorset Police and partner voluntary agency Dorset Search & Rescue (DorSAR).

## **Police Search Advisor (PoISA)**

A Police Search Advisor (PolSA) is defined by the College of Policing as an ‘advisor to chief officers on low-risk counter-terrorism searches and other search related issues such as crime and missing person enquiries’. All PolSAs are trained and qualified to manage and review all missing person searches using the SCENARIO model.

A PolSA is specifically trained to review and manage the search strand of a high risk missing person’s investigation and, although they will feed into a Senior Investigating Officer / Silver Commander, they are not responsible for managing other elements of the investigation.

The PNSC define four different categories of missing persons in order that PolSAs and Search Managers can profile and apply statistical data and tactics as part of the search plan. These four categories are:

1. Missing (lost and would wish to be found)
2. Missing voluntarily
3. Missing ill or injured
4. Missing under influence of a third party

On request of a FIM, Patrol, MST, Duty, SIO or Silver Commander, a PolSA will:

* Provide initial review, categorise and profile the missing subject based on STORM logs and information & intelligence provided
* Agree the working hypothesis
* Provide initial search advice for responding units and set parameters for initial visual checks and home address searches based on the category of missing person
* Devise a search plan based on the working hypotheses and available information and intelligence
* Request brief and deploy appropriate trained volunteer search assets as appropriate
* Maintain a chronological policy log of decisions, actions, search strategy, working hypotheses, including appropriately timed SCENARIO based reviews in line with PNSC guidance
* Ensure that a record of all managed search activity has been completed in the form of search tasking sheets, a master tasking log and associated mapped areas
* Ensure that all search activity has been debriefed, reviewed and areas re-tasked where appropriate
* Ensure that all search documentation is accessible for review by another PolSA, the PolSC or SIO

As the investigation continues and the search begins to expand beyond initial actions, the role of the PolSA is to:

* Manage all Police-led searching and review and assess all search activity conducted by other agencies
* Review any new information and intelligence received from the SIO and manage/ re-task searches accordingly
* Establish a Search Cell and seek the allocation of appropriate resources
* Co-ordinate, debrief and log searches conducted by other agencies
* Advise the SIO/Silver Commander on the most appropriate search tactics based on the working hypotheses
* Feed any information and intelligence gained through searches to the SIO/Silver Commander
* Request appropriate trained search assets from Police or other agencies
* Brief and task dedicated search assets in accordance with the working hypotheses
* Record all search activity and maintain a log of decisions and rationale

## **Lost Person Search Manager (LPSM)**

The Lost Person Search Manager (LPSM) is trained in missing persons search and management.

A LPSM is specifically trained to review and manage the initial search actions of a high risk missing person investigation and, although they will feed into the SIO/Silver Commander they are not responsible for the management of any other elements of the investigation.

An LPSM or PolSA will only physically manage one high risk missing person search at a time. The on-call PolSA may however be able to provide support or advice across more than one missing person incident. Once tasked, an LPSM or PolSA must not be tasked with any other work, to do so may impact the effectiveness of the overall working strategy.

On request, the role of an LPSM is to:

* Complete an initial review, categorisation and profile of the missing person based on STORM logs and information and intelligence provided
* Agree the working hypothesis with the SIO/Silver Commander
* Provide initial search advice for responding units and set parameters for initial visual checks and home address searches based on the categorisation of the missing person
* Devise a search plan based on the working hypotheses and available information and intelligence
* Request, brief and deploy appropriate trained volunteer search assets as appropriate
* Record all search activity and maintain a log of decisions and rationale
* Attend the scene and task search resources face to face where possible. However, where time is of the essence, IVC’s should not be delayed by the attendance of the LPSM
* Maintain a chronological policy log of decisions, actions, search strategy and working hypotheses
* Ensure that a record of all managed search activity has been completed in the form of search tasking sheets, a master tasking log and associated mapped areas
* Ensure that all search activity has been debriefed, reviewed and areas re-tasked where appropriate.
* Ensure that all search documentation is accessible for handover to another LPSM or for review by a PolSA or PolSC and/or the SIO or Silver Commander
* Continue to support the allocated PolSA in an ongoing search operation as required

An LPSM should not be used for missing person search management where it is believed the subject is missing at sea or an inland body of water, where the subject is a child aged five years or under, or where third party involvement is suspected.

## **Tasking and Review**

Early search advice is vital and can have a significant impact on the final outcome of a missing person’s search. As such, advice from an LPSM or PolSA should be sought immediately in high risk missing person investigations. Advice may also be sought in medium risk investigations where search parameters exist and the FIM/ Patrol Inspector SIO deems it necessary; in such cases a risk review will also be triggered.

A PolSA may be asked to review and manage any type of missing persons search and are on call 24/7.

Alliance Search Operations Policy (SA043) outlines when a missing person search can be managed by an LPSM and when a PolSA should be appointed. Further detail on the deployment of LPSMs is also contained within policy that an attached quick reference guide in the form of a flowchart.

* [SA043 'Alliance Search Operations Policy'](http://dpintranet/Force%20Document%20Library/Force%20Document%20Library%20Overvie/Force%20Document%20Library/Policy%20and%20Procedure%20Docs/Police%20Search%20Operations%20Policy.pdf#search=sa043)

Trained LPSMs are available across the force and will be detached and tasked to conduct the search management role by the FIM. Once deployed a LPSM/PolSA must be dedicated to that search operation and actively engage with the SIO/Silver Commander. All missing person search operations can have the review of the on call PolSA at any point, but a review must be conducted by a PolSA no later than the 12-24 hours window from time of report. Where there is an immediately identified search requirement and an LPSM is not available, the on call PolSA must be contacted.

* [**APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing persons > Search**](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations)

When considering using partner agencies in search and rescue, refer to the below hyperlink for working practice.

* [High Risk Missing Persons Flow Chart Including LPSM](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/High%20risk%20missing%20persons%20flow%20chart%20including%20LPSM%20v6.docx)
* [Missing Persons\DW87 Search and Rescue (SAR) v1.3](file:///W:\INTERGRP\Missing%20Persons\DW87%20Search%20and%20Rescue%20(SAR)%20v1.3%20-%20(2).doc)

## **Extended Search Operations**

Where an initial high risk missing persons, search has exceeded 12 - 24 hours and the subject has not been located, it is highly likely that this will become an extended search operation involving multiple assets over a protracted time period.

In such cases, a Search Cell should be established and the appropriate assets assigned. Depending on the scale of the search this can be relatively small involving only one PolSA and other agencies or, in the case of a large scale operations, may include:

* Support from a Police Search Coordinator (PolSC) and additional specialist subject matter experts (SMEs) such as working at height, underwater search, cave rescue and specialist dog searches
* LPSM or LPSM’s in support of the lead PolSA in the form of admin, scribe, tasking or other required function
* Additional PolSAs providing search management across wider areas and continuity throughout each 24hr search period
* Other admin support in the form of equipment, logistics and transport.

In large scale search operations, the allocation of a PolSC is essential. A PolSC will have extensive knowledge of searching and the associated procedures. Dorset has a dedicated full time PolSC whose function is to maintain oversight of all search operations across the Force. The PolSC function may be delegated to an experienced PolSA who has the relevant operational experience to perform the role.

Once appointed, the role of the PolSC is to:

* Act as the search SPOC for the investigative team by attend daily meetings held by the SIO/ Silver Commander
* Maintain oversight and continuity of all search activity in accordance with the working hypotheses and the agreed search strategy
* Provide the SIO/ Silver Commander with a daily review of search progress and ensure that the search and investigative strategies are aligned
* Liaise with other agencies such as the NCA in relation to third party involved searches
* Maintain oversight and continuity of search staffing and ensure there is suitable resilience within the search cell
* Monitor search assets and recommend/ provide rationale for the use of mutual aid assets in a timely manner to the SIO or Silver and Gold Commanders

In any search operation it is essential to consider resilience within the PolSA and LPSM functions alongside other command roles. Searches need to continue day and night and should only be stopped where it is too dangerous for teams to continue. Failure to provide sufficient resilience for search managers puts pressure on PolSA’s and LPSM’s to work excessively extended hours and risks mistakes due to fatigue and stress.

All search assets deployed on a search operation must be subject of a hot debrief prior to stand down. In circumstances where the search operation spans over multiple days a hot debrief of search assets will take place at the end of each day or operational phase. This is vital to negate opportunity for missed items, missed re-tasking requirements, or ambiguity.

## **Management and Use of Community Volunteer Searchers**

For missing person searches, Community Volunteer Searchers (sometimes referred to as ‘Spontaneous Volunteers’) are defined as:

*Any member of the public who has not received formal training in relation to search or search management and is not a member of a Professional Volunteer search organisation.*

It is important that Community Volunteer Searchers are not confused with trained professional volunteers such as Mountain Rescue or DorSAR teams. PolSAs are trained in the benefits and potential concerns of using volunteers within a search environment.

Key factors that may influence the use of and potential numbers of Community Volunteer Searchers are:

* Category and type of missing person
* Location
* Time of day and day of the week
* Weather
* Social Media

The use of Community Searchers and the scope of their use will be decided by the dedicated SIO / Silver Commander in consultation with the lead PolSA or PolSC.

The PNSC sets out guidelines for the use of Community Volunteer Searchers which includes each individual completing a Community Volunteers Search Registration form before being receiving a written briefing sheet and tasked with a search area.

Teams of volunteers must be supervised by a team leader to ensure that they have communication with the search cell, first aid support and leadership while searching. Good practice dictates that this will normally be facilitated by a trained volunteer or Police Officers/Police Staff. The ratio of team leader to volunteer will vary depending on the environment and hazards but will usually be between 1:10 and 1:20. Using these ratios, 200 Community Volunteer Searchers at a ratio of 1:10 could require up to 20 Trained Volunteers, Police Officers or Police Staff to act as team leaders. At best with a ratio of 1:20 it would require 10 Trained Volunteers, Police Officers or Police Staff to act as team leaders. Additional staff would be required to complete the registration process.

The PNSC provides the following guidance with regards to CVS’s;

*‘Members of the family, friends and the community may wish to assist in the search for a missing person. These searchers are different to the established volunteer search teams.’*

*‘There will be occasions when a quick search immediately conducted for a missing child by the friends and the family will be successful. This may well be a suitable tactic employed by the first officer attending and cannot be dismissed by a PolSA who has been requested for some very immediate advice. However, by the time a PolSA is called to manage and plan a search the use of such informal searchers will have passed.’*

*‘Nevertheless, there will still be people volunteering to search. There are risks associated with using community searchers such as search ability, health, safety, welfare, police liability, contamination of evidence and the involvement of criminals. The dilemma facing the PolSA is that if these volunteers are not managed, they may decide to conduct searches on their own accord and consequently interfere with the search area. A further result of not using the volunteers may lead to bad media coverage and a deterioration in community–police relations.’*

*‘If community search volunteers are to be used, they may initially be tasked with conducting searches of their own properties, especially when the missing person may just be wandering and lost in an urban area. Community volunteers may also conduct searches of public access areas (parks, playgrounds and footpaths) outside the immediate search areas. If they are to be used, they should be assessed as able to conduct the search, i.e., that they are dressed and equipped accordingly. They should be registered and consent to being checked by the PNC. They should be briefed and ‘logged on and off’. It is good practice to appoint a police officer to manage the community search team.’*

* [Missing Persons\Community Searchers documents](file:///W:\INTERGRP\Missing%20Persons\Community%20Searchers%20Documents)

# **Media**

APP provides guidance on media management, required to:

* Respond to media requests for information
* Enable the use of the media for appeals for information in relation to suspects, offenders and witnesses
* Obtain information or guidance on police communication methods
* Build public confidence

APP specifies that a media strategy should be developed in all high-profile cases and where the family have instigated their own media appeal. The objectives of the media strategy will be to generate information and public awareness to assist the enquiry and to control speculation.

It highlights that it will not be appropriate to use the media in every case, but that 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.

* [App Media Section](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/#media)

[Missing People - Media and Communications Strategy](http://dpintranet/Force%20Document%20Library/Force%20Document%20Library%20Overvie/Force%20Document%20Library/Policy%20and%20Procedure%20Docs/Missing%20People%20-%20Media%20and%20Communications%20Strategy.pdf)forDorset Policeensures a consistent approach and provides a link to an FCC flow chart. The views and consent of the missing person’s family/next of kin on any public appeal must always be sought and taken into consideration. However, the final decision whether or not to launch a public appeal is a decision for the owning Inspector (SIO/Silver Commander in high-risk cases) as part of the wider response to the missing person investigation.

The decision will be taken in recognition that in some higher-risk or complex cases a public appeal may frustrate achievement of the working strategy priorities. The decision whether or not to launch a public appeal will be specifically documented, along with a clear plan for the timing of any such appeal and arrangements for the response to public information.

Such appeals may not be restricted to reports of direct sightings of the missing person or any vehicles associated with them. Consideration should be given to wider appeals, e.g., to be vigilant for discarded property potentially belonging to the missing person, or for the public to review private or business CCTV/vehicle dash-cam footage within a specified area and timeframe.

# **Family Support including Family Liaison Officers**

The trauma associated with a missing person investigation may place families under immense pressure and stress. Investigators are likely to need family and associates to provide detailed, sometimes sensitive information and there may also be public and media interest. It is therefore vital to the investigation that the confidence and co-operation of family and close associates is maintained. APP is prescriptive on the action to be taken to manage family support and this guidance must be followed.

* [**APP > Major investigation and Public Protection > Missing persons > Family Support**](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations)

# **Harm Reduction**

## **APP Requirements**

APP outlines a force responsibility to work in partnership with other agencies and to ensure a shared understanding of the situation and agree the level of risk in relation to people who are missing or have been identified as likely to go missing in the future. Individual agency and joint protocols should be developed and shared, centred on a joint aim of preventing harm.

* **APP>Major Investigation and Public Protection>Missing Persons>** [**Strategic responsibilities**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/strategic-responsibilities/)

APP specifies that an individual should be referred to social care where there is concern that the person requires extra help from social services beyond those available to the general public. It outlines the threshold for referral as being met where:

* The individual is a ‘repeat missing person’, (reported as missing three times in a rolling 90 day period)
* The individual has experienced, or is likely to experience significant harm
* In the case of children, the parent or carer appears unable or unwilling to work to support and meet the needs of a child that has gone missing

## **Public Protection Notices (PPNs)**

In all cases that meet the criteria outlined in 3.9.1 above **and in all child cases**, a Public Protection Notice (PPN) will be submitted. The timing of this notification will be specific to the circumstances of the particular case. In most cases this may after the missing person is located and there is best information about the person’s vulnerabilities and support needs.

In line with APP guidance, social services will be informed **immediately** where a child that is missing is assessed as high risk.

## **The Adoption of Repeat Missing Persons for Management**

Dorset Police has invested in a Missing Support Team (MST) as outlined in 3.4.8.

The MST will as a strategic objective fulfil an operational approach to locating missing individuals in line with their remit, as outlined earlier. Although they will operate in uniform and with Police radio, they will fall outside of response demand allocation which affords sufficient time to focus on missing episodes without distraction.

They will engage with relevant internal partners and departments including Neighbourhood Policing teams (NPT) and also the Integrated Missing Person and Child Exploitation Team (IMPACT), who will undertake activity in line with their own skill sets and functionality to prevent repeat episodes by using appropriate problem solving processes.

## **IMPACT – To be removed as Impact will no longer exist**

IMPACT will work with partners to support the use of the Pan-Dorset Exploitation Tool, to inform the identification of risk linked to children. They provide a specialist resource with the proactive ability to investigate such complex crimes. In addition, in conjunction with partners, IMPACT will agree the Top Dorset Missing Children (TDM) and will determine the appropriate lead agency.

* [IMPACT Terms of Reference](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Crime%20and%20Criminal%20Justice/Public%20Protection/IMPACT%20(Integrated%20Missing%20Per/IMPACT%20Documents/Terms%20of%20Reference%20Impact%20(January%202019).docx)
* [IMPACT Top Child Mispers](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Crime%20and%20Criminal%20Justice/Public%20Protection/IMPACT%20(Integrated%20Missing%20Per/Pages/Default.aspx)
* **APP>Major Investigation and Public Protection>**[**Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation/)

## **Philomena Protocol**

[The Philomena Protocol](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Prevention%20Department/MissingPeople/Shared%20Documents/Philomena%20Protocol%20Dorset%20August%202020.docx) is a problem solving and safeguarding process to optimise a proactive preventative partnership approach to children and young people who go missing. The Philomena Protocol is a scheme that asks carers to identify children and young people who are at risk of going missing, and to record vital information about them that can be used to help find them quickly and safely.  The process is underpinned by mutual engagement with Social Care, Foster Parents and Care Facilities to improve outcomes on a local level and implement higher standards of handling and reporting in order to safeguard.

The person or agency responsible for the child adds details about the young person to the Philomena Protocol form (which you can be downloaded from Dorset Police internet page) including:

* a physical description
* who their friends are
* a recent photograph
* whether they've gone missing before

A significant element of the Philomena Protocol is ensuring that the care provider is fully aware of the nature of all relevant risk concerns relating to the child placed in their care.  The completed and maintained form, together with 24/7 access to it all by all care placement staff will ensure that where a child is reported missing to the police, the informant can articulate the risk concerns and necessity for police involvement.  The placement must do everything to ensure this is completed at the start of a placement of a child at risk of going missing and to keep it updated.

The completed form is not held on the police system as this is a live form.  When a call is placed to the police to report a child missing, the call taker will record all the information shared from the Philomena Protocol onto the STORM log to aid in locating the missing child.

The Philomena Protocol is used in many areas nationally and the form can be transferred to the new carer, who will then be responsible for keeping it safe and up to date. Similarly, if a young person transfers to Dorset or is reported missing from another area but believed to be in Dorset, we can check whether they have an existing Philomena Protocol in place so that any current information can be shared with the police in a timely manner.

## **Neighbourhood Policing (NP)**

Each Local Policing Area (LPA) will adopt the rolling top three missing persons (adult and children) for neighbourhood management within the relevant jurisdiction. They may be allocated other vulnerable or repeat missing persons for local ownership and management through force tasking processes or through their own assessment of vulnerability.

* [Repeat Missing Person Process NPT](file:///W:\INTERGRP\Missing%20Persons\NPT%20MISPER%20PROCESS\Repeat%20Missing%20Persons%20Process%20NPT.docx)

## **The Multi-Agency Response**

Joint-agency strategies for prevention and intervention, to reduce the likelihood of harm and disrupt patterns of behaviour and risk taking will be implemented in individual cases where considered necessary.

APP requires consideration of a ‘trigger plan’ outlining key actions to be taken if a repeat missing person is reported missing a further time to help locate the person as quickly as possible and to ensure that relevant partners are informed. Trigger plans must be reviewed following the conclusion of any subsequent missing investigations and shared with other police forces if the individual moves to another area.

Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) processes and the documentation of joint management/response plans, including the use of police or other agency powers and wider enforcement tactics such as Child Abduction Warning Notices, will also be considered.

* [MARM Guidance](http://www.bcpsafeguardingadultsboard.com/uploads/7/4/8/9/74891967/self_neglect_and_hoarding_v2.0_final.pdf)
* [Child Abduction Warning Notices Policy and Procedure](http://dpintranet/Force%20Document%20Library/Force%20Document%20Library%20Overvie/Force%20Document%20Library/Policy%20and%20Procedure%20Docs/Child%20Abduction%20Warning%20Notices%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.docx)
* [Child Abduction Notices](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/strategic-responsibilities/)

Weekday partnership meetings will be held between the Strategic missing person coordinator and child social care on a daily basis to discuss child related missing episodes during the previous 24 hours or weekend round up on Monday.

**3.9.8 Prevention Interviews and Case Closure**

APP outlines the police responsibility to ensure that a returned missing person is safe and well. The purpose of this **prevention interview** is defined as being, ‘to identify any ongoing risk or factors which may contribute to the person going missing again’.

* [**Prevention Interviews**](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/#prevention-interviews)

APP states that prevention interviews should be carried out in all high-risk cases but should also be considered for low and medium risk cases. It goes on to say that prevention interviews will be carried out as soon as possible and face to face.

Local interpretation of this guidance will be as follows:

* In high-risk cases a prevention interview will be carried out **immediately and face to face** once the person returns or is located
* In medium and low risk cases a **face to face** prevention interview will be carried out as soon as possible after the person returns or is located where:

1. The person is under 18; or
2. The person is a repeat missing person by APP definition (missing three times in a rolling 90-day period); or
3. Where information suggests the person has experienced or is likely to experience serious harm or has been the victim of crime whilst missing. This will take place as soon as possible after the person returns or is located

* In all other cases the prevention interview may be carried out by telephone.

Dorset Police prevention interviews are documented on RMS Niche under the return section of the missing report.

Prevention interviews may be carried out by Police Officers, or by Police and Community Support Investigators where appropriately trained.

A PPN must be completed in all cases where a face-to-face prevention interview is required and where considered appropriate in other cases. Completion of a PPN does not negate the responsibility to complete immediate safeguarding referrals where considered necessary. Actions taken will be recorded on the PPN.

# **Long-Term Cases**

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

Missing person investigations will progress through various stages, with most persons being located within a relatively short timescale. Some missing persons will not be found and will require longer term police involvement.

Investigations where the missing person is suspected to have been the victim of a serious crime will be owned and managed within the Crime and Criminal Justice (C&CJ) Department. All other active missing person investigations will be owned managed by patrol.

Where all active lines of enquiry are complete and the missing person has not been found after 28-days, the case must remain open and be the subject of review as a long-term case.

APP specifies that long-term cases should be reviewed by a senior officer who has been trained as an SIO.

* [APP Long Term Cases](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/)

## **Dorset Police Local Variation**

A review by an SIO trained DI will be required to confirm that all lines of enquiry are complete and that the investigation can be categorised as a long-term case.

The Missing Support Inspectors will retain ownership and review responsibility for long-term cases for the first six-months, conducting a further review at a minimum of 3-months and 6-months in line with APP.

Missing Support inspectors will task a further DI review at any point that circumstances change or where the information has developed.

Where there remain no active lines of enquiry at the point of the six-month review ownership and review responsibility will be tasked to a dedicated SIO-trained Inspector level supervisor via the FIB Actions Manager.

On receipt, the nominated DI will review and confirm the long-term case status and retain ownership, conducting a further review at twelve-months and annually thereafter.

Responsibility to ensure that the family of the missing person is kept updated passes from the Missing Support Inspector to the nominated DI with Managing Unit responsibility. This will include an update at the point of each review.

Should new information come to light, this will trigger an immediate review. Consideration may also be given to cold case reviews of outstanding missing person cases.

* [APP Cold Case Review](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/missing-person-investigations/)

In unsolved missing person cases that are over a year old forces should seek to process and retain records of as many of the available forensic identification samples as possible.

In cases where the evidence suggests that the missing person has died in non-suspicious circumstances, the SIO may decide to place the investigation into a ‘reactive phase’. In these circumstances a full NDM is required and the family will be appraised that proactive enquiries will cease. Missing divers believed lost at sea are an example of an investigation that could be placed into a reactive phase.

# **Cross Border Cases**

Difficulties can arise as to which force should undertake an enquiry when the person reporting missing normally resides elsewhere, e.g., student in temporary accommodation or a day trip visitor.

If a person lives in one force area and is reported missing in another, particularly in high risk cases, then, unless there are clear agreed reasons to the contrary, the force in whose area the missing person normally resides will manage the investigation.

If a missing person report is taken for a person who has gone missing from another force area the officer receiving the report should record full details, complete all relevant enquiries and conduct an initial risk assessment even though the other force is likely to assume responsibility for the enquiry.

In such cases, the missing person report should be transferred without delay to the force in whose area the missing person normally resides. The officer should record full details of the new force reference number and provide contact details for the new force for the person reporting the missing person. Any dispute over ownership will be referred to the Force Incident Manager (FIM) for a decision to be made.

In cases that cause significant concern, the officer in the initial recording force should ensure that consideration is given to the family liaison needs of the reporting person, e.g., a local officer should be appointed as an interim arrangement pending the transfer of responsibilities for the enquiry.

When a transfer has taken place after the circulation of the details the National Police Missing Persons Bureau must be informed in order to update their record (details must include the new case reference). The officer taking the initial report must ensure that the PNC record also reflects the new owner of the case.

* [Cross Border Transfer Form](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/Cross-Border-Transfers-National-Form-v1.0.docx)

## **Out of Force Requests**

National learning has highlighted a risk in relation to out of force requests for action(s).

In high-risk cases, to ensure the required focus, urgency and resourcing the following process will be followed upon receipt of such requests –

* **Create a STORM log and occurrence** – Ensure it is headed "High Risk MisPer - out of force request" and confirm overall primacy rests with requesting force. Ensure all documentation and correspondence are added to the reports tab of the occurrence.
* **Dorset Police Missing Person policy** – The high risk missing person action will be treated with the same level of priority and resourcing as if the investigation was owned by Dorset Police. The high risk missing person flowchart will be followed as appropriate to ensure key actions such as i24 for intelligence checks, early notification of FIM for review & confirm required action(s) and notify Patrol Inspector / Missing Support Inspector or duty Insp to progress as Bronze are completed.
* **Clarity** – Any confusion/disagreement between forces over the risk grading must be reviewed by the FIM with their equivalent in the owning force as soon as possible.
* **Oversight** – Ensure ongoing oversight at both FIM and Patrol Inspector level until action(s) are completed. To achieve this, the STORM log details are to be added to the FIM and Patrol Inspector hand on forms, as well as the DTM document for monitoring. This entry is to remain until the action(s) completed and the owning force has been updated.

In medium or low-risk cases a STORM log will be created and FIB24 should be tasked to conduct initial research to ascertain any information held by Dorset Police that may influence the risk grading or prioritisation of the local response. Where this applies, the relevant information must be shared with the owning force to trigger a risk review.

The FIM must also give early consideration to the question of ownership. Even if ownership does not transfer to Dorset Police, consideration must be given to the value of creating a missing person occurrence, either to ensure an active and measured response and appropriate resourcing and regular review or, where the missing person is a Dorset/BCP Looked After Child or Vulnerable Adult, the fact that they are missing triggers the relevant notifications to internal departments and partner agencies involved in safeguarding management.

This is particularly pertinent in the case of children who previously resided in the Dorset Police area and fall under the statutory responsibility of Dorset/BCP Children’s Social Care but have been placed in accommodation in another force area. Whether or not to create an occurrence for medium risk out of force incidents will be considered by the FIM/DM on a case by case basis and the decision documented on the STORM log.

**3.11.2 Missing Overseas**

Where there is information to show that the MisPer may have left the country, a Yellow Defusion notice will be required.

* [Missing overseas guidelines](http://home/CCJ/Intel/Shared%20Documents/IL%20Interpol%20Process%20Maps/IL%20MISPER%20update%20260421.pdf)

# **Learning/Debriefing**

APP requires senior officers to ensure there are procedures in place to identify good practice and lessons learned from previous incidents and that they are disseminated across the police force and with partner agencies where relevant. At the conclusion of a missing persons investigation consideration will be given to debriefing.

The requirement for a hot debrief of search assets is highlighted in the search section of this Policy. PolSAs will always consider the need to request an internal peer review during ongoing search operations as best practice. As part of the wider National support model via the Police National Search Centre there is also a facility for the PolSC to request an independent external review at any stage during a search operation.

The SIO or Silver Commander will consider the need for a wider debrief in the context of the investigation.

The Force Tactical Lead for missing will support the arrangements for structured debriefs, particularly where they are multi-agency. The Force Review Officer may also be involved.

Identified learning will be reviewed by the Strategic Missing Person Coordinator and Tactical Lead to ensure and coordinate an appropriate force response.

**4. Monitoring and Review**

Review and amendments will be coordinated by the Policy Unit.

The document owner has overall responsibility for ensuring the content of the operational procedure is appropriate and up to date.

This operational procedure will be reviewed annually.

To ensure Dorset Police achieve their priorities, performance and development in this area is monitored through the following quality assurance processes:

* Active and intrusive supervision by managers
* Annual audits and reviews
* Serious Case Reviews
* Organisational learning
* Multi-agency working through partnership tactical and operational groups
* The pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children’s Partnership and Dorset and BCP Local Adult Safeguarding Boards
* External reviews – HMIC, IOPC and similar
* Repeat Missing Persons Profile.
* Peer Reviews
* PSD complaints and misconduct data

Feedback relating to this operational procedure can be made in writing or by e-mail to the Missing Persons Strategic Lead – responsibility for which currently sits with the Territorial Policing Commander.

**5. Associated Documents**

**Policy and Procedure**

* **DOR-P-049** Missing Persons Policy
* [Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedure](http://dpintranet/Force%20Document%20Library/Force%20Document%20Library%20Overvie/Force%20Document%20Library/Policy%20and%20Procedure%20Docs/Critical%20Incident%20Management%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.doc)

**SharePoint**

* [Vision, Purpose & Priorities](https://swishpnn.sharepoint.com/sites/OV)
* [Human Rights Legislation](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)
* [Records Management](http://dpintranet/Departments/Corporate%20Development/Force%20Information%20Standards%20Un/Records%20Management/Pages/Default.aspx)
* [Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)](http://intranet/bcudepts/InfoManagement/FreedomofInformation/Pages/homepage.aspx)
* [Government Security Classification (GSC)](http://intranet/bcudepts/InfoManagement/InfoAssuranceUnit/Pages/GSC.aspx)
* [UK General Data Protection Regulation /Data Protection Act (2018](http://intranet2013/bcudepts/InfoManagement/DataProtection/Pages/homepage.aspx))
* [Code of Ethics](http://dpintranet/CodeOfEthics/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Police Staff Council Standards of Professional Behaviour](https://www.dorset.police.uk/media/62503/new_psc_handbook_final_version.pdf)

**College of Policing**

* + - * [National Decision Model](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/national-decision-model/the-national-decision-model/)
* [Authorised Professional Practice (APP)](https://www.app.college.police.uk/)

* [Missing Persons](https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons" \l ":~:text=The%20College%20of%20Policing%20is,to%20identify%20and%20address%20risks.)

* [Risk](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/risk-2/?s=)

* [Safeguarding Children](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-abuse/)

* [Critical Incident Management](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/critical-incident-management/?s=)

* [Information Management](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/information-management/?s=)

* [International Investigations](https://www.college.police.uk/app/investigation/international/international)

* [Child Sexual Exploitation](https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation/)

**Missing Person Initial Management Process**

* [Missing Person Process Document](\\\\R-FSHQ01\\COMMON\\INTERGRP\\Missing Person Process\\MISSING PERSON PROCESS DOCUMENT 01052020.docx)
* [Deployment Manager Initial Template](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/DM%20INITIAL%20TEMPLATE%2012032019.docx)
* [FCC Supervision Initial Template](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/FCC%20SUPERVISION%20INITIAL%20TEMPLATE%2012032019.docx)
* [FIC Initial Template](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/FIC%20INITIAL%20TEMPLATE%2012032019.docx)
* [OIC1 Template](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/MISSING%20PERSONS%20OIC.%201%20TEMPLATE.docx)
* [Inspector Review Template](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/INSPECTOR%20REVIEW%20TEMPLATE.docx)
* [Ongoing Inspector Review Template](http://dpintranet/Command%20Areas/Territorial%20Policing/Missing%20Person%20Investigations/ONGOING%20INSPECTOR%20REVIEW%20TEMPLATE.docx)

**Other**

* NHS Mental Health Missing Person Policy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **6. Document History** | |
| **Present portfolio holder** | Chief Superintendent – Dorset BCP LPA Commander |
| **Present document owner** | Superintendent – Local Policing |
| **Present owning department** | Prevention Department |
| **Below details required for new documents, major amendments (Dorset only) or novel/contentious amendments (Devon & Cornwall** **only)** | |
| **Name of Board and/or Chief Officer approving** | DCC Board |
| **Date approved** | 26/07/2022 |
| **Business Board member approving** (Devon & Cornwall only when not contentious or novel) |  |
| **Date approved** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **7. Version History** | | | |
| **Version** | **Date** | **Reason for amendments** | **Amended by** |
| 1.0 | 21/06/2022 | Initial document.  Reviewed. Document renumbered. Replaces P10:2003. | Legitimacy Team (7101) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

We welcome any comments or suggestions you wish to share about the content or implementation of this procedure. If you would like to make contact to discuss further, please email: [.Policies@dorset.PNN.police.uk](mailto:.Policies@dorset.PNN.police.uk)

# **Appendix A – Missing Persons Process Document**

Missing Persons Process

(Initial and Ongoing Management)

…………………………………………..……

Designed to define the relationships between relevant interested parties across command to ensure consistent and clear ownership from inception to finalisation.

Icon

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Author: Chief Insp 1112 PITMAN V10 06/07/2022

OFFICIAL – not protectively marked

Background

This document contains further information to support the process flowcharts created to manage a Missing Persons investigation from the initial response to ongoing management and investigation, providing guidance on how College of Policing (CoP) Authorised Professional Practice will be followed through local structures.

It is not designed to supersede current policy and process flowcharts but acts to define the relationships between the Force Command Centre (FCC), LPA Patrol Inspectors and Detective Inspector functions and make roles and responsibilities clear.

There are three flowcharts with associated guidance notes:

1. FCC initial management & incident log closure
2. From initial call-handling and LPA Patrol Inspector review, to dedicated ownership passing to the LPA Patrol Inspectors including Missing Support Team
3. The ongoing management of a missing persons investigations until the person is located, or the investigation is passed to a Detective Supervisor as a long-term case

**Appendix A**

**Missing Person Flowchart – FCC Initial Internal Management**

FCC receives call, Incident Log & Niche Missing Person Record created.

Should the Missing Person return now, amend Managing Unit to LPA Patrol Inspector and task Patrol Sergeant for RI.

Niche “Missing Person History Report” to be used in this process

Using FCC Initial Review Form, FCC Supervisor/FIM conducts NDM Review on OEL and assesses Risk.

FIM NDM REVIEW

MEDIUM

LOW

HIGH

Proportionate Priority Actions Identified.

Actions Identified

Tactical Plan developed. LPA Patrol Inspector informed.

Routine Resourcing

Earliest available resources dispatched prioritising missing children (max 3hr review).

Immediate resources

Notify Supervision at earliest opportunity.

LPA Patrol Inspector co-ordinates initial operational response. FIM retains oversight of deployments and requirement for specialist assets.

Notify Supervision without undue delay.

Primary Investigation allocated to an OIC.

Primary Investigation commenced and initial actions under way (OIC 1).

FCC direct liaison with LPA Patrol Inspector and close Incident Log.

LPA Patrol Inspector retains operational command and ownership working to the FIM.

FCC direct liaison with LPA Patrol inspector, if no Command & Control requirements - close Incident Log.

Inform Force Duty Silver following Fast Track Actions completion.

FCC Initial Management – Guidance Notes

The FCC receives a missing person report, an incident log and Niche occurrence is created for a missing person.

FCC supervision conduct an initial NDM review on the FCC initial review template form and grades the missing person as High, Medium or Low, confirming the risk level on the Risk Assessment tab within Niche. **It is essential the Missing Person’s History Report is used in this process.** The appropriate NDM review template within the OEL in Niche will be used.

The review tab within the Niche misper occurrence need only be updated with ‘*see NDM review attached to reports tab’* and the relevant next review time input.

The reviewing supervisor should not automatically set the review time at 6hrs but consider the most appropriate timescale in relation to the risk and circumstances, with 6hrs being the maximum. However, in the case of Children a review time of NO LONGER than 3 hours will be set.

To avoid unnecessary duplication and to minimise the volume of text on a missing person incident log, the reviewing supervisor need **only update the incident log with the assessed risk followed by the identified initial actions.** Best practice will be to add a comment on the incident log stating ‘FULL NDM REVIEW ON THE NICHE OCCURRENCE’.

Should the missing person return at this point, the Managing Unit will be amended to the LPA Patrol Inspector and the Patrol Sergeant will be tasked with the Return Interview (RI).

Risk level guidance

**HIGH**

The FIM assumes Tactical Command (Initial Silver), owning and overseeing the missing person investigation as part of an “Initial” Command Structure. Consideration will be given to implementing a formal command structure following discussion with the Force Silver however it is suggested this occurs once the initial Golden Hour principles are completed. Initial priority actions will be identified and tasked for **immediate officer dispatch**. Early direct liaison will occur with the LPA Patrol Inspector, who will assume Operational Command (Bronze). The FIM will consider resourcing, specialist tactical options, and consultation with tactical advisors such as PolSA/ LPSM for search management.

*There* ***must*** *be a FIM review for a High Risk missing person, even if it is initially reviewed by another FCC supervisor. This is not to check or override, but to ensure that, as the responsible Tactical Commander and initial owner of the High Risk missing person investigation, there is a FIM input on the review. This need not necessarily be a full review but sufficient to demonstrate awareness and confirmation of the initial NDM-based supervisory review.*

*If the FIM is committed i.e., commanding a firearms incident or similar, then there should be no delay in the process and the DM/Supervisor will conduct a review and then endorse that review accordingly. The FIM should then review and assume command of the missing person investigation at the earliest opportunity.*

**MEDIUM**

FCC will task the **first available unit** to attend and carry out the primary investigation and complete relevant initial actions. The dispatcher will ensure the local LPA Patrol Inspector is aware of the missing person response and endorse the log accordingly. Once again Children will be prioritised.

**LOW**

FCC will task an officer using routine resourcing to attend and carry out the primary investigation and complete relevant initial actions. The local Patrol Sergeant is to be informed during that tour of duty.

In both **MEDIUM** and **LOW** risk cases, **once an officer is at scene and has commenced the primary Investigation**, FCC supervision will make **direct contact** with the LPA Patrol Inspector to notify them of the investigation and impending requirement for their review and this notification will be recorded on the incident log. If it is agreed that there are no further command & control requirements it will be agreed that the FCC supervisor will **change the Managing unit within Niche to ‘LPA Patrol Inspector and the incident log will be closed** and managed from this point by them, initially via the Niche OEL. *See ‘Ongoing initial misper management process document’ and flowchart for further information.*

**Missing Person Flowchart – FCC to LPA Patrol Inspector**

FCC receives call, Incident Log & Niche Missing Person Record created.

Should the Missing Person return now, amend Managing Unit to LPA Patrol Inspector and task Patrol Sergeant for PI.

FCC conducts initial NDM Review and Grades (High/Medium/Low).

HIGH

LOW

MEDIUM

LPA Patrol Inspector takes Bronze role - coordinates the operational response. DI review tasked once initial actions completed/ASAP. Search advice agreed with the PolSA/ LPSM and support provided to the search cell (if applicable).

FCC dispatched first available unit. Initial Investigating Officer conducts Primary Investigation. FCC liaises directly with LPA Patrol Inspector, if no ongoing C&C requirements \*\*INCIDENT LOG CLOSED\*\*.

Managing Unit changed by FCC to relevant LPA Patrol inspector

Niche “Missing Person History Report” to be used in this process. Multiple tasks to be created – not all actions on one task

Patrol Sgt quality assures primary investigation, provides case direction and notifies the LPA Patrol Inspector of readiness for review, who completes a FULL NDM Reviews ASAP on OEL and tasks priority actions.

LPA Patrol Inspector REVIEWS with F.I.M.

If risk lowered treat as Medium/Low.

If remains HIGH, FIM to discuss and agree with Duty Silver an appropriate time for implementation of a dedicated command structure.

Actions for FCC

Desk Based Actions suitable for IRC/MST

Actions for LPA

Task placed into 9769 Niche Inbox (w/e notify IRT Sgt)

Liaise with FCC for tasking on Incident Log OR Niche Task

Task placed into Geographic Duty Sergeant Niche Inbox

FORMAT “MISPER - <surname> - <risk> - enquiries”.

Amend “Managing Unit” to LPA Patrol Inspector or MST Inspector.

LPA Patrol Inspector moves PRIMARY task to Geographic Duty SERGEANTS Niche inbox. Patrol Sergeant notified to drive actions. Amend OIC to “Patrol Sergeant” for area. Should ownership be established with MST then amend accordingly.

Consider and task Duty Detective Inspector with formal review as per policy.

LPA Patrol Inspector/MST Inspector ensures Grip and Drive around enquiries and REVIEWS when/if required, ensuring review times are set according to the risk, taking into account Children currently missing.

LPA PATROL INSPECTOR/MST Inspector OWNS THE MISSING PERSON INVESTIGATION.

Initial Management – Guidance Notes

Once the call has been received in the FCC, an incident and Niche Occurrence is created followed by an initial NDM using the embedded Niche templates.

**HIGH** – LPA Patrol Inspector becomes the initial Bronze, working to the FIM as Initial Silver. Dynamic response. Consider use of separate Incident Logs for specific tasks and spreadsheet actions matrix with appointment of an actions manager (e.g., Media appeal, search, address checks, etc.)

**MEDIUM / LOW** – FCC responsible for securing officer attendance who conducts Primary Investigation. Once commenced FCC will liaise with the LPA Patrol Inspector ref incident log closure.

LPA Patrol Inspector notified. When Primary Investigation completed, they conduct a FULL NDM review of the missing person’s investigation so far using the embedded templates within Niche to include:

* Information and Intelligence from the attending officer, use of the Missing Persons History Report on Niche, PNC, local intelligence systems
* Risks will be considered and assessed (i.e., missing person, public, community, police)
* Working Strategy to be formulated to **directly address** the risks posed
* Actions to be sequentially numbered. Considerations of the current Missing Persons Policy recently distributed and on the Missing Person template under the “Review – Inspector” OEL type.
* Tasks are created to TP Geographic Patrol Sergeant and IRC/MST for actions (i.e., multiple enquiries within one task). Format “MISPER - <surname> - <risk> - ENQUIRIES”. For action needed by FCC inform them for either an Incident Log to be created OR inform them of a Niche task for slower time enquiries
* For IRC tasking at WEEKENDS please notify the on-duty Sergeant
* Close liaison will occur between the Missing Support Team (MST) and the LPA Patrol Inspector at the start of each tour of duty to identify actions for MST. MST will own missing persons investigations and Managing Units should be amended accordingly if this is the case

Once a Primary Investigation has been completed AND it is identified that the investigation should be managed by another Police Service area, a “Cross-Border Transfers” form will be completed and sent to the relevant area with supporting documentation, with contact being made to alert them to this. Generally, this will be the responsibility of the LPA Patrol Inspector/MST Inspector. Full OEL entries to be completed.

Whilst Ownership is clear, a Duty Late Turn Inspector is usually available to support in the management of reviews and actions of those held by the LPA or MST Inspectors. An early conversation will be required at the start of the tour of duty.

**Missing Person Flowchart – Ongoing Management**

LPA Patrol Inspector OWNS the Missing Person Investigation

DUTY Patrol Inspector working weekday Late Turn and Weekend Day Turn.

Ensure Grip & Drive around enquiries with reviews AT LEAST EVERY SHIFT.

\*\* CONFIRM RISK and refresh the LINES OF ENQUIRY \*\*

Consider DI Review in line with policy, and IMPACT team consultation.

Where a Missing Person is already managed by the MST with a Partnership Plan, amend Managing Unit accordingly and OEL entry acknowledging ownership.

PROACTIVE trawl of LPA owned Missing Persons Investigations / discussion with LPA Patrol Inspector to identify those requiring support.

LPA Patrol Inspector takes Bronze role - coordinates the operational response. DI review tasked ASAP. Search advice agreed with the PolSA/ LPSM and support provided to the search cell (if applicable).

RISK CHANGED TO HIGH

YES

NO

NO

NO

LPA Patrol Inspector REVIEWS with F.I.M.

If risk lowered treat as Medium/Low

If remains HIGH, FIM to discuss and agree with Duty Silver an appropriate time for implementation of a dedicated command structure.

Actions for TP

Desk Based Actions suitable for IRC/MST

Actions for FCC

Task placed into Geographic Duty Sergeant Niche Inbox.

Task placed into 9769 Niche Inbox (w/e notify IRCSgt).

Liaise with FCC for tasking on Incident Log OR Niche Task.

LOCATED

NOT LOCATED

Should the person be located deceased, ensure suitable OIC nominated for family follow up in conjunction with Coroners Officer.

If believed to be victim of Serious Crime – ownership to pass to C&CJ.

LPA Patrol Inspector retains for 28 days, if not located SIO DI to be tasked to confirm all enquiries complete and now a “Long Term Case”.

LPA Patrol Inspector retains ownership conducting minimum 3 & 6 month reviews.

After 6 months SIO DI to be tasked through FIB Actions Manager to confirm Long-Term status and take ownership (annual reviews).

Timely Prevention Interview conducted, completion of PPN where appropriate and action where immediate risk identified.

Liaise with Missing Support Team (MST) Inspector for attention and action going forward.

Consider partnership discussions/strategy meetings.

YES

Regular Missing Person OR Longer Term Missing Person in need of Intervention/strategy discussion.

NO

Investigation Finalised

Ongoing Management – Guidance Notes

It is important to note the LPA Patrol Inspector now OWNS the missing person investigation; however, grip & drive around enquiries will be PROACTIVELY overseen by the Duty Patrol Inspector and Missing Support Team (MST) if needed when they are not on duty.

Regular reviews are to be conducted on missing person’s investigations at least every SHIFT, using the embedded templates within Niche OEL where appropriate (i.e., enough information to require a reassessment of the investigation).

Where the Missing Person is already managed by the MST with a Partnership Plan in place, ownership may be transferred to them following consultation with the rationale for such a decision documented. Actions will be coordinated between Patrol and MST resources.

On each NDM review the following MUST be considered and documented:

* + Any change in the Information/Intelligence requiring a reassessment of the risk grading. In any event the risk will be confirmed
  + A review of the outstanding actions, ensure they are allocated and consider new actions in line with any changing information. Should it be necessary, Priority enquiries should be listed first, and this made clear
  + Is a Detective Inspector Review required in line with Policy? Note that this must be undertaken once the majority, if not all the primary actions have been completed
  + For regular and repeat missing children, consider engagement with IMPACT team

When the risk is reassessed as HIGH, then revert to usual High Risk response.

**HIGH** – LPA Patrol Inspector becomes Bronze working to FIM or other nominated Silver. Dynamic response. Consider use of separate Incident Logs for specific tasks (e.g., Media appeal, search, address checks, etc.) and/or actions matrix spreadsheet, with allocation of an actions manager.

Investigations where they are suspected to have been a victim of serious crime will be owned and managed by Crime & Criminal Justice Department. This may not negate the need for a local TP Bronze to co-ordinate local over enquiries/search activity in line with the SIO strategy.

Where all active lines of enquiry are complete, and 28 days have elapsed, the investigation will be subject to a long-term case review. A review will then be conducted by a Detective Inspector to confirm that all lines of enquiry are complete, and that the investigation can be categorised as a Long-Term Case. Geographic Patrol Inspectors will retain ownership and review responsibility for the first 6 months reviewing as a minimum at 3 and 6 months. A further DI review will be tasked should the circumstances change or where the information has developed.

Where there are no active lines of enquiry at 6 months, review and ownership will be tasked to a dedicated SIO DI via the Force Actions Manager, changing the Managing Unit. The DI will retain conducting annual reviews.

Responsibility for NOK/Family updates will pass to the SIO DI with ownership.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title:**  **Missing Person Process Document** | | | | |
| **Version Control** | | | | |
| **Version** | **Reason**  (i.e., change of circumstance/annual review) | **Date of change or review:** | **Amended Version issued as:** | **Date distributed**  **(= current version)** |
| **V8** | Terminology | February 2020 | V9 | Uploaded March 2020 |
| **V9** | Structural Changes within Dorset Police and inclusion of Missing Support Team | July 2022 | V10 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |