

# Policy



<b>Missing Persons</b>			
<b>DOR-P-049</b>			
<b>Version</b>	1.0	<b>Host Force</b>	Dorset Police
<b>Effective date</b>	20/07/2020	<b>Host Policy Unit</b>	Dorset Legitimacy Team
<b>Version date</b>	05/09/2022	<b>Policy Owner</b>	Superintendent – Local Policing
<b>Review date</b>	05/09/2023	<b>Policy Author</b>	Inspector – Patrol
<b>Associated Procedures</b>	DOR-OPr-062 – Missing Persons Operational Procedure		

## 1. Policy Summary

This policy aims to support delivery of the Police and Crime Commissioner Crime Plan in making Dorset the ‘safest county’ through improved service delivery, improved management of threat, risk and harm and providing clear standards that the public can expect regarding the service we provide.

It also looks to satisfy the Chief Constable’s vision for Dorset Policing supporting the Police and Crime Commissioner’s plan with the purpose of ensuring that Dorset Police are focussed on being tough on crime, keeping people safe and putting victims first. The vision is underpinned by six priorities that cut across all areas of Dorset Police business and will be important in how the force manages missing person investigations.

The Chief’s priorities under the vision and mission are extremely important and fit into missing person investigations.

- Relentless pursuit of criminality
- Putting victims first
- Exceptional local policing
- Ethical and inclusive
- Innovating, transforming and improving
- Enabling people to deliver excellence

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This policy describes Dorset Police's response to missing person investigations with the intention that all investigations are managed in a consistent, timely and professional manner and to provide a high level of service to the public at all times.

It aims to achieve the most efficient use of resources whilst providing a fully integrated approach to ensure early and appropriate resolution with full consideration of vulnerability, needs and situational context.

It will provide clarity to all staff involved in missing person episodes and will ensure that national APP guidance is adopted.

The intended audience will be all practitioners involved in missing person episodes which will include Force Control Room officers and staff, Patrol policing officers, Missing team, NPT and specialist assets which include Police Search Advisors and Lost Person Search Managers and senior governance.

This policy will outline non-operational and legal aspects such as; statement of intent and rationale, legal requirements which include equality impact assessment. It will also incorporate the rationale for consultation around change.

## **2. Purpose, Standards and Legal Basis**

Dorset Police are obliged to abide by all relevant legislation and other guidance as appropriate:

- The Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Authorised Professional Practice
- National Decision Model
- Visions, missions, values
- Equality and diversity matters including the Public Sector Equality Duty, Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Behaviour

The above underpins everyday policy, procedures, decisions, and actions in policing today. Further guidance is provided in detail within the associated operational procedure.

Appropriate links are provided in Section 6 of this document.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities can be found in the associated procedure DOR-OPr-062 – Missing Persons Operational Procedure

### **4. Policy Information**

The majority of persons reported missing return soon after their disappearance without suffering any harm. However, some will suffer harm from their own actions or the actions of others whilst missing. The potential for the missing person to be a victim of crime must not be overlooked and it must be recognised that the initial response and investigation could be the start of a major crime inquiry.

The overarching priority is the preservation of life and the prevention of serious harm.

Wider priorities are to maintain trust and confidence of the public, working with partners to reduce the harms associated with people going missing. Where a crime has occurred, we will pursue offenders and secure and preserve evidence to support a prosecution.

This policy allows Dorset Police to discharge their duties in respect of missing persons to deliver against three key aims:

- To ensure that all missing people are appropriately recorded and that the response is proportionate to an informed assessment of the risk and bespoke to the requirements of the individual circumstances. This includes ensuring a prioritised response through the deployment of appropriate resources where assessed as high-risk.
- To provide a flexible model of response that allows for ease of movement between risk categories, dependent upon information to suggest a likelihood of escalation or de-escalation of risk.
- To reflect that Dorset Police is jointly responsible with statutory partners to reduce the harms associated with people going missing, recognising that missing episodes are usually a symptom of an underlying issue for which the individual or their family, or those otherwise responsible for their care, may need support and that the Police is often not the most appropriate lead agency.

This policy affects all members of Dorset Police involved in the response to reports of missing people, along with responsible persons from statutory and non-statutory partner agencies and the missing person themselves along with their friends, families, and carers.

It is based on guidance contained within College of Policing (CoP) Authorised Professional Practice (APP) in relation to Missing People as part of the Major Investigation and Public Protection module. Where force policy deviates from APP

guidance this will be explicitly stated as an approved variation with the rationale provided.

## **5. Monitoring and Review**

Review and amendments will be coordinated by the Policy Unit.

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

This policy will be reviewed annually subject to legislation/process changes.

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 email to the Missing Persons Strategic Lead.

## **6. Associated Documents**

### **Policy and Procedure**

- **DOR-OPr-062** Missing Persons Operational Procedure

### **SharePoint**

- [Vision, Purpose & Priorities](#)
- [Human Rights Legislation](#)
- [Records Management](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000 \(FOIA\)](#)
- [Government Security Classification \(GSC\)](#)
- [UK General Data Protection Regulation /Data Protection Act \(2018\)](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Police Staff Council Standards of Professional Behaviour](#)

**College of Policing**

- [National Decision Model](#)
- [Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\)](#)
- [Missing Persons](#)
- [Risk](#)
- [Safeguarding Children](#)
- [Critical Incident Management](#)
- [Information Management](#)
- [International Investigations](#)
- [Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

**Other**

- [NHS Mental Health Missing Person Policy](#)

<b>7. Document History</b>	
<b>Present portfolio holder</b>	Chief Superintendent – Dorset BCP LPA Commander
<b>Present document owner</b>	Superintendent – Local Policing
<b>Present owning department</b>	BCP LPA
<b>Below details required for new documents, major amendments (Dorset only) or novel/contentious amendments (Devon &amp; Cornwall only)</b>	
<b>Name of board and/or Chief Officer approving</b>	DCC Board
<b>Date approved</b>	26/07/2022
<b>Business Board member approving</b> (Devon & Cornwall only when not contentious or novel)	
<b>Date approved</b>	

<b>8. Version History</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reason for amendments</b>	<b>Amended by</b>
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)