

Missing Persons

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Policy Statement

Summary

West Yorkshire Police is committed to safeguard effectively and efficiently the public and to do so must correctly assess risk missing people to differentiate between people who are at genuine risk of harm and those who are not. West Yorkshire Police is also committed to conducting high quality investigations proportionate to the risk to the person.

This policy and procedure details how West Yorkshire Police will respond to reports of missing persons.

Scope

This policy applies to all police officers and police staff.

Principles

Definitions

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

- The College of Policing definition includes the phrase *'whose whereabouts cannot be established'*. The College of Policing Approved Professional Practice (APP) also states that *'the police are entitled to expect parents and carers, including staff acting in a parenting role in care homes, to accept normal parenting responsibilities and undertake reasonable actions to try and establish the whereabouts of the individual'*.
 - A person will not therefore be recorded as missing on Niche until the carer/ reporting person has undertaken reasonable actions to ascertain the whereabouts of the absent person unless there is a real, immediate risk of harm that justifies immediate police intervention.
 - In this policy, when the term *'absent'* is used it is not referring to a separate category of absence. The term *'absent'* is used to describe a person who is not where they are expected to be. The person may be *'missing'* or they may just be late home, testing the boundaries or have omitted to inform the reporting person where they are. The term *'absent'* is therefore used to describe the person before a decision has been made on whether they are missing or not missing.
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Level of Harm

- The level of harm that will justify police intervention is different for a child and an adult. Whenever the term *'harm'* is used in this policy and procedure:

- If the term relates to a child, the relevant level of harm is '*significant harm*'.
 - If the term relates to an adult, the relevant level of harm is '*serious harm*'.
 - See the definitions of 'significant harm' and 'serious harm'.
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Police Duty to Investigate Reports of a Missing Person

Adults

- When a report of a missing adult is received, the police must complete a risk assessment and:
 - Consider whether there are any suspicious circumstances;
 - Consider whether there are any grounds to believe the person has suffered harm;
 - Ascertain the person's level of vulnerability; and
 - Consider the risks they are likely to be exposed to and the likelihood of the person suffering harm.
 - It may be necessary to conduct an initial investigation to determine these things. If, however, having carried out proportionate enquiries, the investigation indicates that the adult is capable of independent living without care and has chosen to go missing, the police need to find the balance between protecting vulnerable adults and respecting an adult's Article 8 Right to Respect for their Private and Family Life. The police are not a tracing agency.
 - If the initial investigation has established that there are no suspicious circumstances and no indication that the person has suffered serious harm or is likely to suffer serious harm, then it may be reasonable and proportionate to discontinue the police investigation and file the case under the option '*Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home*'.
 - Even if it is considered that the missing person is capable of independent living without care, has chosen to go missing, and the case is to be filed under the option '*Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home*', a missing person occurrence must still be created on Niche to ensure that there is a clear audit trail. If the person has not been located, Storm logs must not be closed without creating a missing person occurrence on Niche unless the Storm log has been appropriately closed under the Healthcare Walkout policy, Truancy policy, Welfare Checks policy or Hostel policy.
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Children

- The police must find the balance between protecting vulnerable children and avoiding unnecessary police contact when a child is testing the boundaries. When a child is late home, or has gone out without

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permission, the police must complete a risk assessment and consider whether there is critical concern that justifies immediate police involvement.

- If there is no critical concern, the police must consider whether the parent or carer has conducted reasonable actions to establish the whereabouts of the child before reporting the child as missing to the police. If the level of risk does not justify immediate police intervention and the parent or carer has not conducted reasonable actions to establish the whereabouts of the child (as a reasonable parent would have done in similar circumstances), and has not allowed the child a reasonable time to return of their own accord, the District Inspector can delay the police response pending the parent or carer completing those reasonable actions.
- If the parent or carer has conducted reasonable actions to establish the whereabouts of the child, and has allowed the child a reasonable time to return of their own accord, then the police must attend to take a missing person report.
- Cases involving children under 16 must never be closed under the option '*Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home*', as a child under 16 will never be considered to be capable of independent living without care.
- Cases involving children aged 16 or 17 can only be closed under the option '*Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home*' in exceptional circumstances when there are reasonable grounds to believe the child has found suitable accommodation, they have no vulnerabilities other than their age, and they are ready to transition to adulthood.

Police Duty to Investigate

The police always have a duty to investigate:

- Where there is concern that the person has been, or is likely to be, a victim of a serious crime (e.g. murder, abduction, kidnap, rape, child sexual offence, false imprisonment, serious assault, human trafficking, modern day slavery or criminal exploitation).
- Where there is concern that a person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, death, serious injury, degrading treatment or a prolonged period of pain or distress. For example, this may be due to the person:
 - Intending to complete suicide or cause self-harm;
 - Being unable to safely interact with their environment unaccompanied;
 - Having left home with no intention to return whilst having care needs that render them incapable of independent living; and/or
 - Being lost, ill or having suffered an accident and needing urgent assistance.
- Where the person is a child under 16 and there is concern that the child has run away from home.

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- Where the person is a child under 18 and there is concern that there is a risk that the child will suffer significant harm whilst absent.
- Where there is concern that a person is extremely dangerous and poses a real, immediate risk of death or serious harm to another person.

This is not a definitive list and must not be used to exclude investigation where there are other genuine concerns about an individual that justify police involvement. It simply provides some examples of when the police must investigate as we seek to find the balance between safeguarding vulnerable people, whilst respecting an adult’s right to go missing and trying to avoid unnecessary police contact with children when they are just late home or testing the boundaries.

Risk Assessment Table

- Every report of a missing person will be subject to a risk assessment guided by the College of Policing Risk Principles, the National Decision Model and Police Code of Ethics.

Low Risk	The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal; or• Unlikely to occur.
Medium Risk	The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as both: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant harm; and• Not unlikely to occur.
High Risk	The risk of harm to the subject and the public is assessed as both: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serious harm; and• Likely to occur.

Levels of Intervention Model

- When a vulnerable person is unsupervised, goes absent, or is late home, they will inevitably be exposed to a certain level of risk.
- The level of risk that the absent person is likely to be exposed to will therefore determine whether it is appropriate to intervene and, if so, the appropriate level of intervention.

<p>NO IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION REQUIRED Level of concern is low and is tolerable by the parent, carer or reporting person. The parent or carer decides to wait for the person to return of their own accord.</p>
<p>PARENTAL OR CARER INTERVENTION</p>

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Level of concern is moderate and unacceptable to the parent, carer or reporting person, but does not justify immediate police intervention.
 The parent or carer accepts responsibility for searching for the person to bring them home.

POLICE INTERVENTION

Level of concern is high and is unacceptable to both the parent/carers/ reporting person and the police. The level of risk justifies immediate police intervention.

There are genuine concerns that the person will suffer harm, or cause harm to another person, and the police have a duty to assist the parent, carer or reporting person to locate the person.

- See further details of the Levels of Intervention Model.

Identifying Risk

- Carers, social workers, police and other professionals have to improve their ability to recognise antecedent behaviour, trigger incidents, out of character behaviour and post-incident behaviour/indicators if we are to effectively safeguard vulnerable people.
- This is about getting to know the missing person and understanding their individual behaviour so that we can better assess risk.

Antecedent Behaviour/ Indicators

- This is behaviour that a missing person engages in just before they go missing.
- This will vary from one person to another and what is considered antecedent behaviour/indicators for one person may not amount to antecedent behaviour/indicators for another person. For example, for one child turning their mobile phone off may be a clear indicator that they are going to see an exploiter and do not want to be tracked, whereas for another child they may simply turn their mobile phone off every time they are annoyed with the carer even though they intend to return home.
- Examples of antecedent behaviour include:
 - A child at risk of CSE putting make-up on prior to going out when it is known that the child usually does this prior to going to meet an exploiter and rarely puts make-up on at other times.
 - A child being very active on their mobile phone and being secretive before going out, when it is known from previous incidents involving this child that this type of phone activity often precedes the child going to meet their exploiters.
 - A child not taking their mobile phone with them when they go out when it is known from previous incidents, that this child always takes their mobile phone with them except when they intend to go missing and do not want to be tracked.

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- A person suffering from mental health issues becoming distressed on a key anniversary of the death of a parent, spouse, child or loved one and then leaving home without their wallet, mobile phone or other personal possessions.
 - If a person has engaged in antecedent behaviour immediately prior to going absent, it will normally be appropriate for the police to immediately record the absent person as '*missing*' and take responsibility for locating the person.
-

Trigger Incidents

- Trigger incidents are incidents that indicate that a person may not be safe.
 - Examples of trigger incidents include:
 - Child being seen to get into an unknown car, or a car linked to an exploiter.
 - Child seen in the company of another child at risk of CSE when it is known that when these two children meet up together, they usually go to meet an exploiter.
 - Child seen going to a hotel with an unknown adult.
 - An adult suffering from mental health issues sending texts, social media messages, or emails saying goodbye to their friends and relatives.
 - If there has been a trigger incident immediately prior to going absent, it will normally be appropriate for the police to immediately record the absent person as '*missing*' and take responsibility for locating the person.
-

Out of Character Behaviour

- When a person behaves out of character, this may indicate that they are worried, troubled or distressed. It may indicate that something has gone wrong.
 - Stereotypical assumptions must not be made. Even if the behaviour is typical of other people, if the behaviour is out of character for that individual, then it must be taken seriously.
 - The family and carers know the individual best and their level of concern for the missing person is often the best indicator of the real level of risk. The family and carer are best able to recognise whether the behaviour is out of character for that individual.
 - If the behaviour is out of character, it will normally be appropriate for the police to immediately record the absent person as '*missing*' and take responsibility for locating the person.
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Post Incident Behaviour/ Indicators

- Post incident behaviour/indicators are behaviour and indicators that suggest something adverse had occurred whilst a person was absent, irrespective of whether they had permission to be absent.

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- Examples of post incident behaviour/indicators on a person's return include:
 - Person appearing upset or withdrawn.
 - Child changing or hiding underwear.
 - Child or vulnerable adult having unaccounted injuries or in possession of expensive gifts.
 - Person being very evasive about where they have been.
 - Adult at risk of domestic abuse having unaccounted bruises or injuries.
 - Where a person exhibits post incident behaviour or there are post incident indicators, this must be investigated as it may suggest that the person has been exploited or suffered harm whilst absent, irrespective of whether they had permission to be absent.
-

Trigger Plans

Principles

- Where the Missing from Home Co-ordinator has identified that a person is a persistent misper (combination of Top Ten Data and risk factors), they will complete the Missing Trigger Plan and attach it as a Missing Prevention Occurrence for the person concerned.
 - The Trigger Plan will include a reporting strategy that has been agreed with the partnership. District Inspectors must not delay the police response, if the reporting person has complied with the agreed reporting strategy.
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Philomena Protocol

Principles

The Philomena Protocol is a form that is completed when a child in care is placed in a residential setting, with foster parents or is assessed as likely to go missing.

The purposes of the Philomena Protocol are:

- To gather information about a child in care when they are placed to:
 - Assess the likelihood of the child going missing from that placement.
 - Assess the risks that they may be exposed to if they do go missing in respect of both their personal factors and contextual factors.
 - Consider what can be done to reduce the likelihood of the child going missing.
 - Record key information about the child that may assist to locate the child if they do go missing: locations frequented, methods of transport usually used, associates and friends, methods of contact (mobile phone, social media etc.).

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- Provide guidance on what actions the carer will be expected to take to locate the child before contacting the police, should the child be late home or go absent.
- Consider what trigger incidents or antecedent behaviour would justify contacting the police immediately if the child is late home or goes absent.
- Contain a reporting strategy to assist the carer to identify when it is appropriate to contact the police.
- Consider the appropriate return process. For example, who is the best person to conduct the prevention interview when the child is located.

The Philomena Protocol form is a living document, must be retained by the carer, and must be updated regularly, especially after a missing incident.

When a child moves placement, a copy of the most up-to-date version of the Philomena Protocol must go with the child to the new carer. It must then be reviewed with the Social Worker and new carer and updated considering any new contextual risks at the new placement. The child's views must be sought on the appropriate response to missing incidents.

Herbert Protocol

Principles

The Herbert Protocol is a form that is completed when a person with dementia (and similar conditions) is assessed as likely to go missing. Although a copy of the Herbert Protocol may be saved on Niche, it is important that a check is made with the reporting person/family at the earliest opportunity to ensure the copy retained by the police is the most up-to-date copy of this form.

The purposes of the Herbert Protocol are:

- To gather information about a person who is assessed as suffering from dementia (or similar conditions):
 - To consider the risks if the person goes missing including medical and health risks.
 - To consider the habits or hobbies of the missing person that may indicate where the missing person has gone.
 - To consider whether the missing person has access to money.
 - To consider whether the person is in possession of a mobile phone.
 - To consider what places the missing person frequents or places of significance that the person may visit when they go missing.

The Herbert Protocol form is a living document and must be updated regularly, especially after a missing incident.

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Ellam Protocol

Principles

The Ellam Protocol/Mental Health Protocol is a form that is completed when a person suffering from mental health issues is assessed as likely to go missing. Although a copy of the Ellam Protocol may be saved on Niche, it is important that a check is made with the reporting person/family at the earliest opportunity to ensure the copy retained by the police is the most up-to-date copy of this form.

The purposes of the Ellam Protocol/Mental Health Protocol are:

- To gather information about a person who is assessed as suffering from mental health issues:
 - To consider the risks if the person goes missing including medical and health risks.
 - To consider the habits or hobbies of the missing person that may indicate where the missing person has gone.
 - To consider whether the missing person has access to a mobile phone, money or a bank account.
 - To consider whether the person is in possession of a bus pass or has access to a vehicle.
 - To consider what places the missing person frequents or places of significance that the person may visit when they go missing.
 - To consider social media access.

The Ellam Protocol form is a living document and must be updated regularly, especially after a missing incident.

Receipt of a Report of a Missing Person

Important

- The police force or district that receives the initial missing person report **must** record the fact that a report has been received in line with this policy.
 - The reporting person **must not** be told to contact another police force or to wait until they get home and report the missing person to their local police station. This is regardless of where the reporting person resides.
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Crime Recording

Important

- **Any officer or staff member who identifies a crime at any point in the investigation must ensure those offences are recorded immediately. There must be no delays and must be actioned by the person who identifies the crime.**
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Initial Contact

Responsibilities

Initial Contact are responsible for:

- When someone reports an individual as missing, considering whether the following policies apply:
 - Hospital/Healthcare Walkout policy;
 - Truancy policy;
 - Welfare Check policy; or
 - Hostel policy.
 - If one of the above policies apply, dealing with the incident under that policy in the first instance.
 - In all other cases, asking the relevant questions from the Misper question set.
 - Asking the caller what actions they have taken so far to locate the person.
 - Using NDM and THRIVE to assess the appropriate grade (Emergency, Priority or Standard).
 - If NDM and THRIVE indicate a Standard response is appropriate:
 - Grading the log as a priority pending a review by the District Inspector; and
 - Endorsing the log that *'a standard response is appropriate but graded as a priority pending review by the District Inspector'*.
 - Using one of the In-codes:
 - Code 690 – Misper – High Risk
 - Code 691 – Misper – Medium Risk
 - Code 692 – Misper – Low Risk
 - Asking whether a Philomena Protocol form (if a child in care), Herbert Protocol form (if the person is suffering from dementia) or Ellam Protocol form (if the person is suffering from a mental health illness) has been completed and, if so, requesting the reporting person sends the latest copy to the police by email.
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Principles

- **Note:** Call takers must not use the in-code – Code 665 – Concern for Safety.

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- **Note:** It does not necessarily follow that the police must deploy immediately if one of the Missing Storm Codes is used. These codes are used to ensure the incident is recognised as a potential missing person incident and to ensure it is referred to the District Inspector.
- The District Inspector will then decide whether to deploy an officer to investigate or delay police deployment pending the carer/reporting person conducting reasonable actions to establish the whereabouts of the person reported missing or to allow the person a reasonable time to return of their own accord.

- **Note:** It must be recognised that any incident initially dealt with under the Healthcare Walkout policy, Truancy policy, Welfare Check policy or Hostel policy may develop, or further information may come to light that affects the risk assessment.
- If the reporting person re-contacts the police because of a change of circumstances or because new information has become available, it may then be appropriate to apply the Missing Persons policy. For example:
 - If a patient or truant does not return home later as expected; or
 - The reporting person has conducted welfare checks themselves and has been unable to locate the missing person; or
 - New information comes to light that suggests there is now critical concern for a missing patient or hostel resident.

- **Note:** Storm logs relating to reports of missing persons who have not been located must not be closed without creating a missing person occurrence.
- This includes where the District Inspector considers the missing person is an adult who is capable of independent living without care and the person has chosen to go missing.
- The rationale for this policy is that experience shows that some adults who were initially graded as a Low Risk Misper were subsequently shown to have suffered fatal outcomes.
- A decision that a person is low risk and has decided to leave home must never be made solely on the basis of the initial information received. Suspicious or concerning circumstances are not always immediately apparent without further police investigation.
- Proportionate enquiries must therefore be conducted to confirm that there are no suspicious or concerning circumstances and that the reporting person has no ulterior motive for reporting the person missing. Details of those enquiries must be recorded on the Niche Missing Person Occurrence.
- Once proportionate enquiries are completed, if the District Inspector is still satisfied that there are no suspicious or concerning circumstances, and that the missing person is an adult who is capable of independent living without care and has apparently chosen to go missing, the District Inspector can ask the Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) to authorise the

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missing person occurrence to be filed under the option '*Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home*'.

Despatch

Responsibilities

Despatch is responsible for:

- Reviewing the log and checking to see if the person is in custody.
- Endorsing the log with any relevant information.
- Immediately notifying the District Inspector (District Hub Commander or Duty Inspector) to review the log.

Note: If the District Inspector is not available, a District Sergeant or Missing from Home Specialist can review the log on behalf of the District Inspector to avoid unnecessary delays. However, the District Inspector retains overall responsibility and must be updated at the earliest opportunity. If a District Sergeant or Missing from Home Specialist is reviewing the log on behalf of the District Inspector, any reference below to the District Inspector would apply to the District Sergeant/Missing from Home Specialist until the District Inspector becomes available and is briefed.

Note: If the call taker has endorsed the log to the effect 'a standard response is appropriate but graded as a priority pending a review by the District Inspector', there is no requirement to deploy an officer prior to the District Inspector's review.

If the District Inspector directs deploying an officer, Despatch is responsible for:

- Pushing the Storm log to Niche which will create an automated task to the PNC Bureau to circulate the person.
- Broadcasting the description over the radio and notifying CCTV if appropriate.
- Where a report relates to a vulnerable adult (e.g. a person with dementia), notifying the attending officer if a Storm flag indicates that the home/carer has completed a Herbert Protocol form or Ellam Protocol form.

Only a police supervisor can authorise a change to the recommended response and this must only be done in exceptional circumstances. If so, Despatch is responsible for:

- Recording the reasons for that decision on the incident log.
- Informing the District Inspector.
- If there is no available resource to attend within the appropriate response time, recording on the log why no resources are available.

- Seeking the assistance of a control room supervisor, resource sergeant or response supervisor to identify a resource, and informing the District Inspector.
-

Despatch – If a Delayed Log Comes Out of Delay Queues

- Responsibilities** If a delayed log comes out of the delay queues, Despatch is responsible for:
- Contacting the reporting person to see if the person has been located.
 - If the person reported missing has been located, recording the circumstances of the return and referring the log to the District Inspector.
Note: Storm logs must not be closed without the Inspector’s authorisation. The District Inspector must decide whether a prevention interview is required and whether the Storm log must be pushed to Niche. Only the Inspector can authorise the Storm log to be closed without pushing to Niche and without a prevention interview.
 - If the person reported missing has not been located:
 - Deciding whether to:
 - Deploy an officer to taking a missing person report and notifying the District Inspector; or
 - Refer the Storm log to the District Inspector to review and for the District Inspector to make the decision on whether to deploy an officer or further delay the Storm log.
 - If the decision is made to deploy an officer, pushing the Storm log to Niche which will automatically create a missing person occurrence and request a PNC circulation.
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District Inspector

- Responsibilities** The District Inspector must:
- Confirm which policy this incident falls under.
 - Assess the level of risk.
 - Decide if it is appropriate to delay deploying a police officer.
 - Decide whether to delay the Storm log and, if so, for how long.
 - Decide if it is appropriate to delay pushing the Storm log to Niche.
-

- Decision 1 – confirm which policy this** The District Inspector is responsible for:
- Considering whether the Healthcare Walkout policy, Truancy policy, Welfare Check policy and/or Hostel policy apply and, if so, applying that policy in the first instance.

- incident falls under**
- If the incident does not fall under one of the above policies, applying the Missing Person policy and following the remaining responsibilities.
-

Decision 2 – assess the level of risk

- The District Inspector is responsible for:
- Reviewing the log (gathering information and intelligence).
 - Considering the circumstances of this incident.
 - Ensuring PNC, PND, Niche, Custody and Corvus have been checked to identify any intelligence that is relevant to the risk assessment or the possible location of the missing person.
 - Ensuring all the relevant police systems have been checked. Note: In different districts the officer who conducts research of information systems may vary, but the District Inspector is responsible overall.
 - Ensuring that the Storm log has been endorsed with who checked each system.
 - Ensuring that any relevant intelligence and information that affects the risk assessment is recorded on the Storm log.
 - Endorsing the Storm log that they are satisfied with the research undertaken.
 - Considering:
 - Any warning markers/Niche flags (e.g. at risk of CVE/self-harm/suicidal/ailment etc.);
 - The number and outcome of previous missing incidents;
 - Relevant intelligence that may indicate the person is at risk of harm from self or others (including any reports or intelligence linked to exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, honour-based violence or female genital mutilation);
 - Details of any risk assessments contained on CSE risk management or missing prevention occurrences (a trigger plan will provide an up to date list of potential fast track actions); and
 - In the case of a child, whether Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) have previously been issued or the child is linked to a sexual or dangerous offender.
 - For children and adults in care, considering information from multi-agency safeguarding partners to inform the risk assessment.
 - Re-contacting the reporting person for further information if required.
 - If there is any suggestion that the missing person is suffering from mental health issues or there is concern that they may take their own life or cause self-harm, ensuring Mental Health Services are contacted at the earliest opportunity to see if the person reported missing is known to them and obtaining relevant information to inform the risk assessment.
 - Completing a risk assessment – High Risk; Medium Risk; Low Risk.
 - Recording the rationale for the risk assessment.
 - When assessing the risk of harm, being cognisant of:

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- The missing person's vulnerability;
- Any unconscious bias;
- Protected characteristics; and
- The ability/inability of a missing person to safeguarding themselves.

Note: On occasions, the District Inspector may require some initial enquiries to be completed to confirm the level of risk. However, an initial risk assessment must still be made on the information that is readily available at that time and then reassessed when those initial enquiries have been completed. The Storm log must not be endorsed that *'there is insufficient information available to assess the risk'*. Instead, there must be an entry similar to *'based on the information available at this time, I have initially assessed the risk as ... This will be reviewed once the following initial enquiries have been completed...'*

Note: *'Absent – No Apparent Risk'* (NAR) must not be used as a category of risk. If under the previous policy the Inspector would have categorised the risk as NAR, the risk must now be categorised as *'Low Risk'*. The rationale for this policy change is that the Levels of Intervention Model acknowledges that there is always some level of risk, but a certain level of risk is tolerated. Low risk does not always justify immediate police intervention. Categorising the risk as NAR is often inaccurate and can leave Inspectors vulnerable to criticism by the IOPC if they delay police deployment and the missing person unexpectedly suffers harm whilst absent, even if the decision to delay police deployment was an entirely reasonable decision.

**Decision 3 –
decide if it is
appropriate to
delay deploying
a police officer
(NB Maximum
of 24 hours)**

The District Inspector is responsible for:

- Considering delaying the deployment of an officer if the level of risk lies within the 'parental/carer' band of the Levels of Intervention Model, the risk is minimal at this time, and the reporting person/carer has not undertaken reasonable actions to establish the whereabouts of the person reported missing, and/or has not allowed the person a reasonable time to return of their own accord.

Note: The District Inspector must not delay the deployment of an officer if there has been any antecedent behaviour, trigger incident, or out of character behaviour that would justify immediate police intervention.

Note: The District Inspector must never take demands on police resources into consideration when deciding whether to delay deploying an officer.

Note: Storm logs can only be delayed where the level of risk does not justify immediate police deployment and where the reporting person/carer **has not conducted reasonable actions** to locate the person reported missing **and/or**

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allowed the person a reasonable opportunity to return of their own accord. In cases where the initial risk assessment has been to delay the log to allow the reporting person/carer **to conduct reasonable actions** to establish the whereabouts of the person reported missing and **has allowed the person a reasonable opportunity to return of their own accord.** Once the reporting person/carer has made the relevant enquiries and given the person opportunity to return of their own accord, the Storm log must then be pushed to Niche and an officer deployed with a standard response to take a missing person report.

Note: If the parent/carer has reported a person as missing in accordance with a reporting strategy that has previously been agreed at a multi-agency strategy meeting, an officer must be deployed to take a missing person report and investigate. This is not the appropriate time to challenge a previously agreed reporting strategy. If the District Inspector feels that the reporting strategy is leading to premature and unnecessary reporting of a person as missing, the District Inspector's concerns must be communicated to the Missing from Home Co-ordinator to review the reporting strategy with the partnership.

If deployment of an officer is delayed

The District Inspector is responsible for:

- Ensuring the log has been endorsed that 'the level of risk lies within the parental/carer band of the Levels of Intervention Model, the risk is minimal at this time and does not justify immediate police intervention'.
- Ensuring the log has been endorsed that 'they consider the person is likely to return or be found by the reporting person conducting reasonable actions to establish their whereabouts'.
- Considering delaying the log for an appropriate length of time taking into account the circumstances, intelligence and apparent risk factors.
- Ensuring the reporting person/carer is made aware of the police decision.
- Ensuring the reporting person/carer is advised to undertake reasonable actions to establish the whereabouts of the person reported missing.
- Recording the rationale for this decision.

If the reporting person does not agree with the District Inspector's decision to delay the police response

The District Inspector is responsible for:

- Ensuring the reporting person's concerns are recorded on the Storm log.
- Ensuring the reporting person is contacted to discuss their concerns and try to find agreement on the appropriate level of risk.
- If the reporting person still disagrees with the decision to delay deployment after being re-contacted, ensuring the reporting person is offered an opportunity to speak to the District Inspector direct.

- If the reporting person accepts the offer to speak to the District Inspector direct, contacting the reporting person at the earliest opportunity to personally seek agreement on the appropriate level of risk.

Note: If agreement still cannot be found, the District Inspector has the final decision on the appropriate police response. However, it is extremely important that the District Inspector records the rationale for their decision on the Storm log. The reporting person can appeal and request that the decision of the District Inspector is reviewed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Duty District Operational Commander. Partnership protocols must detail this escalation process.

**Decision 4 –
decide whether
to delay the
Storm log and, if
so, for how long**

The District Inspector is responsible for:

- Delaying Storm logs and deciding the appropriate length of time to delay the Storm log. See Examples of reasonable delay.
- Recording the rationale for delaying the police response and the length of the delay on the Storm log. See also Despatch Centre responsibilities.

Note: The maximum overall delay is 24 hours, but periodic reviews must be carried out with a maximum single delay being 8 hours unless the overnight exception is applied. District Inspectors may decide that a delay of one of two hours is appropriate, or any single time period up to a **maximum** of 8 hours. In respect of children under 16 and vulnerable people who are not capable of independent living without care, this period is likely to be significantly less than this maximum of 8 hours. The only time the log can be delayed beyond 8 hours is if the log is delayed after 2200 hours and the risks are assessed as being minimal, then it can be delayed until 1000 hours the following morning to give the opportunity for the person to return of their own accord overnight. The rationale for this exception to the 8 hour rule is that where the circumstances suggest that the current risks are minimal and that the person reported missing is likely to be staying overnight at a safe location, they will often not return or make contact with the reporting person until the morning. Consequently, early reviews often lead to a delay in deployment being automatically extended to see if the person returns later that morning.

Note: All incidents must be considered on their own merits. However, see examples of what is normally considered an appropriate length of time to delay a log. These examples are given as a guide to assist professional decision making and ensure some consistency. Any decisions outside of these time frames will require a clear, sound rationale to be recorded on the Storm log.

Note: All overnight delays must be reviewed at 1000 hours at the latest to ensure the duty Inspector/Hub Commander has opportunity to review the log in a timely manner.

Child Sexual Exploitation, County Lines and Criminal Exploitation Cases

- If a person is at risk of child sexual exploitation, county lines or criminal exploitation, it may still be appropriate to delay the police response if the circumstances suggest that the person is just late home or testing the boundaries, and the reporting person has not conducted reasonable enquiries to locate the person or allowed the person a reasonable opportunity to return.
- How long it is appropriate to delay the police response will depend on the level of risk of exploitation or whether the person has been previously exploited. If the risk of exploitation is high, it may not be reasonable to delay the police response for more than two hours and, in some cases, it may not even be reasonable to delay the police response for more than one hour. This policy must not be used to inappropriately delay the police response to exploitation cases, no matter how many occasions the person has been reported missing before.
- If the reporting person has already waited a couple of hours to allow the person a reasonable opportunity to return of their own accord and has conducted reasonable actions to locate the person, the Duty Inspector must not then delay for a further two hours. An officer must be deployed promptly, otherwise this may unintentionally encourage premature reporting on the next occasion.
- In exploitation cases, officers must be reminded that their responsibility is not just to locate and return the missing person, but they are also responsible for considering criminal offences and securing and preserving evidence to enable perpetrators to be disrupted and prosecuted. The missing person investigation must therefore be considered as potentially part of a criminal investigation into exploitation.

**Decision 5 –
decide if it is
appropriate to
delay pushing
the Storm log to
Niche**

If the District Inspector has decided to delay police deployment, the District Inspector is then responsible for:

- Considering whether to delay pushing the Storm log to Niche if they expect the person to return home soon or be located by the reporting person/ carer.
- In all other cases, requesting that the Storm log is pushed to Niche which will automatically create an occurrence and request a PNC circulation.

When a log comes out of the delay queues and person located

If a delayed log comes out of the delay queues and is referred to the District Inspector and the person has been located, the District Inspector is responsible for:

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- Deciding whether:
 - To close the log without pushing to Niche and without a prevention interview because the relevant criteria are met; or
 - To push to Niche and request a prevention interview because there are concerns about the absence.

Note: See details of criteria that must be met to close a log without pushing to Niche and without a prevention interview.

When a log comes out of the delay queues and the person *not* located

If a delayed log comes out of the delay queues and is referred to the District Inspector and the person has **not** been located, the District Inspector is responsible for:

- Conducting a review of the circumstances and risk using the NDM.
- If they consider the level of risk still lies within the 'parental or carer intervention' band of the Levels of Intervention Model and they are contemplating further delaying the police response:
 - Ensuring the reporting person is re-contacted and informed;
 - If the reporting person does not agree that it is appropriate to further delay the police response, personally contacting the reporting person at the earliest opportunity to discuss and try to find agreement on the level of risk;
 - If agreement still cannot be found, making the final decision on the appropriate police response; and
 - Ensuring any concerns expressed by the reporting person and the rationale for further delaying the police response are recorded on the Storm log.

Note: The reporting person can appeal and request that the decision of the District Inspector is reviewed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who is currently Duty District Operational Commander. Partnership protocols must detail this escalation process.

Note: The maximum time the log can be delayed overall without police deployment is 24 hours after the time the person was last seen. After 24 hours, if the absent person has not been located, they must be recorded as a 'missing person', an officer must be deployed as soon as possible and the Storm log must be pushed to Niche which will automatically create an occurrence and request a PNC circulation.

Initial, or reviewed, level of risk lies within Police Intervention band

If the District Inspector initially, or when reviewing the Storm log after a delay, considers the level of risk lies within the Police Intervention band, they are responsible for:

- Reviewing and confirming the risk as:

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- High;
 - Medium; or
 - Low.
 - Reviewing the appropriate police response:
 - Emergency;
 - Priority; or
 - Standard.
 - Considering any fast track actions proportionate to the risk.
 - Requesting the Storm log is pushed to Niche as a missing person which will automatically create a missing person occurrence and request a PNC circulation.
-

Attending Officer

- Responsibilities** Attending officers are responsible for:
- Determining that the incident is a missing person report and obtaining as much information as possible to help locate the individual.
 - Checking for any flags, protocols or trigger plans.
 - Determining whether the Misper is at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, honour-based violence or female genital mutilation and, if so, obtaining full details to establish if an immediate investigation is required.
 - Making all necessary enquiries at the scene to locate the missing person as quickly as possible including any actions detailed in the trigger plans.
 - Obtaining details of any vehicles that the person may have access to and requesting markers on relevant vehicles on the PNC without delay.
 - Considering the benefits of requesting that the Missing People Charity send a 'TextSafe' message to the missing person's mobile telephone.
 - Making a thorough search of the missing person's home and other relevant locations, e.g. where the missing person has been reported missing from a hospital.
- Note:** It is the responsibility of organisations, e.g. hospitals, to conduct searches of their premises before making a report to the police, in order to confirm that the individual is in fact missing. Once officers are in attendance, all subsequent investigations are their responsibility, and this includes confirming that the individual is in fact missing by making a thorough search of the location(s) which is equal to the risk level identified. Individuals must not accept people's claims that they have searched a particular premises/location and the person is not there.
- Being aware of the risks posed to themselves by missing persons who have committed chemical suicide.

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- Ensuring during searches of premises that they also search for items which will assist in subsequent enquiries to locate the missing person or inform the risk assessment, e.g. suicide notes, diaries, banking details, phones and laptops.
- If officers are unable to complete a sufficient search either because of the area to be searched, e.g. the grounds of a hospital, or access issues, e.g. a loft area, liaising with the Duty Inspector who will decide whether to deploy additional or specialist resources, e.g. a POLSA.
- Completing a Missing Person Report on their handheld device, attaching the latest available photograph/digital image of the misper. **Note: there must be one misper occurrence created per misper.** If the misper is with other mispers, for example 3 children missing together, the occurrences must be linked. Individuals must never use misper accompanied.
- If a missing person is found in the presence of a suspected exploiter, giving consideration to immediately arresting the exploiter to secure and preserve evidence.
- Where a missing person is found, adding the “Located” link as a link for that person. Individuals must **never** record “Found” occurrences.
- Making the reporting person and other significant individuals aware of who to contact if they require an update from the police and establishing the frequency of that contact, which will be on at least a daily basis in the initial stages of an enquiry until agreed otherwise, and reassuring them that they will be notified of significant developments as soon as possible.

Officers must not manually create a missing person occurrence but deal with the report on the occurrence created by the Storm to Niche interface.

Initial Missing Report and Prevention Interview Part One submissions to Niche must be done via the mobile data device.

Duty or Response Sergeant

- Responsibilities** Duty or response sergeants are responsible for:
- Being aware of any new missing persons’ reports that are received.
 - Monitoring the deployment of attending officers and ensuring that:
 - They are deployed in accordance with the assessment of risk; and
 - Enquiries are made to establish if there is a trigger plan or protocol.
 - Liaising with attending officers at an early stage to ensure all necessary initial enquiries have been identified and actioned in a timely manner.
 - Confirming that any initial searches have been completed and identifying if additional resources are needed to complete a thorough search commensurate with the level of risk.

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- In appropriate cases, attending the scene and directing initial enquiries in person.
 - Monitoring the progress of identified actions, initiating fresh ones as necessary.
 - Ensuring that active reports are allocated to specific staff with detailed enquiries identified for them to complete.
 - Liaising with and updating the District Inspector on the circumstances of the report, the risk level identified, resources deployed and initial lines of enquiry initiated.
 - Where a special operations room (SOR) is in use, ensuring they carry out additional responsibilities as listed below.
 - Liaising with the Safeguarding Unit (SGU) Missing from Home Co-ordinators to monitor and co-ordinate with ongoing SGU enquiries.
 - Monitoring the report to ensure that relevant parties, e.g. family or reporting person, have been updated with the current position of enquiries on a daily basis, unless agreed otherwise.
 - Briefing on-coming sergeants about the current status of active missing person reports and current position regarding enquiries.
-

Hub Commander/Duty Inspector

Responsibilities – if high risk

Hub Commanders and Duty Inspectors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that officers are immediately despatched to meet and speak with the reporting person.
- Dealing with as a critical incident. There is no requirement to notify district Operational Commander (DOC)/PACE cover or a Detective Inspector until an officer has attended to confirm the circumstances and risk.
- In all cases, ensuring that there is effective and intrusive supervision of attending officers, e.g. where appropriate this may include deploying a sergeant to the scene to co-ordinate initial enquiries and searches.
- Ensuring that sufficient resources are made available:
 - In order to start immediate house/ground searches; and
 - For other fast track investigate lines of enquiry.
- Once a high risk missing person is confirmed, immediately informing the duty Detective Inspector and District Operational Commander (DOC)/PACE cover.
- Co-ordinating and recording all police activity. The setting up of a Special Operations Room (SOR) is seen as good practice.
- If the missing person is aged under 18, notifying local children's services immediately.
- Following the WYP protocol for requests for initial media releases of high risk missing persons. The decision as to whether to request a media release

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must be carefully considered and documented and specifically address whether this would reduce or increase the risk of harm to the missing person. The rationale for the decision as to whether to request a media release must be documented.

- Ensuring that BTP are notified if:
 - BTP has placed a suicide related information marker on the PNC;
 - There is a risk of suicide and the missing person resides, frequents or was last seen within the vicinity of a railway line; or
 - There is specific information that the missing person is likely to visit or use the railway system.
-

Risk assessments and reviews

- Hub Commanders, duty Inspectors and Safeguarding Detective Inspectors (DIs) are responsible for the risk assessments, reviews and supervisory oversight of the management, recording and investigation of missing persons supported by missing person investigators.
 - The assessment of risk must be regularly reviewed at every point of handover such as the beginning and end of each shift. This must be documented on the Niche OEL handover template by the Duty Inspector or the relevant sergeant.
-

Hub commander reviews

Every 24 hours, District Inspectors must:

- Reassess the risk level and document a rationale for that decision.
 - Check that enquiries have been completed satisfactorily.
 - Decide what further enquiries need to be done.
 - Ensure the enquiries are allocated to a specific officer.
 - Consider whether to inform the district DI.
 - Ensure the reporting person or other relevant person has been updated with the current position, at least daily, and any significant developments unless agreed otherwise with them.
 - Ensure that the occurrence is updated and a review form is completed on Niche.
-

Special Operations Room responsibilities

Duty DIs, Hub Commanders and duty/response sergeants must:

- Ensure that, through the deployment of a dedicated researcher, despatcher and loggist, all lines of enquiry are:
 - Identified;
 - Tasked out; and
 - Recorded.
- Co-ordinate searches, ensuring that they:
 - Consult a POLSA trained officer; and
 - Use appropriate Operational Support staff.

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- Ensure appropriate circulations are made via PNC and to surrounding districts and forces.
 - Ensure all relevant agencies, that may assist in locating the missing person, are identified and contacted.
-

Missing Person Co-ordinator

Responsibilities

District Missing Person Co-ordinators are responsible for:

- Assisting the district in assessing and identifying high risk missing person reports at the earliest opportunity and monitoring all district missing reports to identify potential threat, risk and harm and initiating appropriate partnership interventions to mitigate and reduce the risk and prevent repeat reports.
- Establishing and maintaining appropriate contacts with partner agencies, attending regular 'missing problem solving meetings', developing a partnership problem solving approach to reduce the likelihood of regular, long term and particularly vulnerable missing persons going missing again and reducing the risk to such individuals should they do so. Where there is concern for an individual's welfare, considering whether to trigger a multi-agency meeting. See APP Major investigation and public protection.
- Where it is assessed that the individual is at risk of going missing again, ensuring that information gathered is used to create a plan outlining key actions to be taken if the person is subsequently reported missing.
- Where the individual repeatedly goes missing, creating a missing problem solving occurrence and trigger plan in line with guidance.
- Ensuring that the Herbert Protocol is offered for those at risk of becoming a repeat missing person so that, should they do so, WYP and partner agencies have the optimum amount of information readily available to secure an early and safe location of the missing person.
- If the missing person is aged under 18, notifying children's services if this has not already been done.
- Ensuring referrals to social care are completed if:
 - The individual is a 'repeat missing person' and there are significant risk factors;
 - The individual has experienced or is likely to experience significant harm; or
 - For children, the parent or carer appears unable or unwilling to work to support and meet the needs of a child that has gone missing.
- Supporting staff dealing with missing person investigations by offering advice and guidance on all aspects of the investigation to ensure an early and safe location of the individual missing.

- Developing procedures and processes to ensure the district effectively manages missing person investigations, and identifying and addressing the training needs of personnel in relation to missing person investigations and ensuring relevant training is made available to all relevant staff.
 - Gathering, collating and ensuring that all intelligence gathered during the course of an investigation is recorded on Niche and analysed and that investigations are initiated into those who harbour and encourage children, young people, vulnerable adults and mental health patients to go missing.
 - Ensuring that reviews of investigations are flagged for completion in accordance with force policy schedules, including those that have been filed without the individual being found, for completion by the district DCI.
 - Managing the process for PNC locate/information reports for persistent missing persons.
 - Ensuring local information sharing protocols are in place and complied with, and ensuring effective prevention checks are shared with partners to develop a deeper understanding of relevant issues so that the individual can be safeguarded and repeat incidents minimised.
 - Ensuring that the correct Storm closing codes and occurrence types have been used to reflect how the investigation has been conducted and concluded.
-

Dedicated Missing Person Investigator

- Responsibilities** Dedicated missing person investigators are responsible for:
- Researching and interrogating the full range of police IT systems and social media ensuring all relevant information is available to inform missing person investigations.
 - Ensuring missing persons investigations are informed by existing reporting strategies and trigger plans.
 - Undertaking enquiries set by the relevant inspector (Hub Commander/Duty Inspector/Safeguarding Inspector/PWA Inspector) ensuring all actions are expedited in a thorough and timely manner and that all relevant information and intelligence is obtained to assist in the location of missing persons.
 - Initiating telecoms/computer enquiries as required through Charter, ensuring that any information pertinent to the location of the missing person is obtained at the earliest opportunity.
 - Initiating and expediting enquiries with external agencies including banks, CCTV, Interpol, Immigration, foreign embassies ensuring that any information pertinent to the location of the missing person is obtained at the earliest opportunity.

- Undertaking and completing prevention checks with missing persons that have been located as directed by the relevant Inspector to seek to establish why the individual went missing; what they did; were any offences committed against or by the missing person; where they went; a photograph of the person; and what action now needs to be taken to prevent a reoccurrence.
- Identifying any criminal offences that may have been committed during the time a person has been missing to maximise the safeguarding of vulnerable people through harbouring and human traffic legislation, ensuring harbourers warnings are served on perpetrators of offences where appropriate.
- Initiating and completing partnership referrals as appropriate to ensure that individuals are signposted and referred to relevant agencies for their future safeguarding.
- Ensuring that all relevant information/intelligence gathered through the course of a missing person investigation is recorded on an intelligence report as appropriate.
- Supporting the District Missing Person Co-ordinator in problem solving of repeat locations/subjects to reduce the likelihood of people going missing.

Note: Risk assessments, review and supervisory oversight of the management, recording and investigation of missing persons are the responsibility of the relevant Inspector (Hub Commander/Duty Inspector/Safeguarding Inspector). Missing person investigators have a role in supporting Inspectors in these functions through providing information, intelligence and research but must not undertake risk assessments or reviews.

Safeguarding Detective Inspectors

- Responsibilities** Safeguarding DIs are responsible for:
- Maintaining an overview of missing persons and ensuring that intervention opportunities and problem solving are addressed at the earliest opportunity.
 - Ensuring this policy is complied with in the district.
 - Supporting and advising the district missing person co-ordinator to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
 - Ensuring that effective joint interagency working arrangements are in place to protect missing children from harm and that police contribute to these processes.
 - Ensuring regular ‘missing problem solving meetings’ are held with partners to maximise opportunities for early intervention in order to minimise risks for:

- Vulnerable people who go missing;
 - Persistent missing persons; and
 - The top ten short and long term missing persons.
 - Ensuring crime prevention work is undertaken, where appropriate, around repeat locations using the skills of specialist officers.
 - Identifying deficiencies in this policy and giving feedback to the Force missing person co-ordinator.
-

Risk assessments and reviews

- Safeguarding DIs are responsible for the risk assessments, reviews and supervisory oversight of the management, recording and investigation of missing persons supported by missing person investigators.
-

District Commander/Duty District Operational Commander/PACE Officer

Responsibilities

- District Commanders, duty district Operational Commanders and PACE officers are responsible for:
- Risk assessing and reviewing every report of a missing person daily, during the morning meeting.
 - Ensuring police deployment to take a missing person report is not delayed beyond 24 hours after the person was last seen.
 - Providing and effectively deploying sufficient resources and ensuring there is clear ownership of actions.
 - Effectively supervising and managing investigations.
 - Releasing staff to attend relevant training to enable them to accomplish these tasks.
-

Protective Services Crime Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)

Responsibilities

- SIOs are responsible for:
- Reviewing all referred missing person investigations.
 - Deciding whether to take responsibility for managing and supervising referred investigations.
 - Supporting and advising districts if they decide not to accept responsibility for managing and supervising the investigation.
 - Ensuring that high risk investigations have direction and focus and all relevant lines of enquiry are identified and actioned as quickly as possible.

- Ensuring that all appropriate WYP resources are made available to the investigation and using the services of other specialist agencies and resources when and where appropriate.
- Directing any media circulations.
- Reviewing cases where districts have requested advice in considering whether a case should be filed under the option 'all reasonable enquires complete'.
- Recommending what enquiries ought to be conducted before finalising under the option 'all reasonable enquiries complete'.

An SIO can amend the review timetable, if appropriate. See Amending Review Timetable.

District Detective Inspector (DI)

Supervisory reviews

District DIs, within 48 hours from the report of a missing person and then every seven days, must:

- Review the risk assessment on behalf of the SIO.
 - Ensure that the investigation is being conducted diligently.
 - Consider if CID should be involved in the investigation and whether to inform an SIO.
 - Ensure contact is maintained with the reporting or other relevant person as agreed, ensuring they are kept updated with the current situation and any relevant developments, and ensuring the occurrence is endorsed accordingly.
 - Ensure a review form is completed on Niche.
-

Responsibilities

Duty DIs must:

- Take command of the investigation, and ensure resources are identified to staff and manage the Special Operations Room (SOR).
 - Ensure that all relevant lines of enquiry are identified and actioned as soon as possible.
 - Continuously monitor the risk posed and the potential involvement of others.
 - Immediately make the duty PACE officer aware and, if relevant, the district SIO or Protective Services Crime.
 - Ensure that all lines of enquiry are accurately recorded.
 - Maintain the continuity of the investigation until the missing person is located.
-

District Detective Chief Inspector (DCI)

Supervisory reviews

DCIs (after seven days from the report of a missing person; then every month for the first three months; then after six months; then after twelve months; and annually thereafter) must:

- Reconsider the risk assessment.
- Review the investigation on behalf of the district senior leadership team.
- Seek specialist advice from Protective Services Crime SIO if required.
- Decide the investigation strategy.
- Decide the appropriate level of resources to commit to the investigation based on what further enquiries are required.
- Ensure that ongoing contact with the reporting or other relevant person is taking place as agreed with them and the occurrence is endorsed.
- Ensure a review form is completed on Niche.

For long-term cases, the DCI must contact an SIO if specialist advice and review of the case is needed.

Note: Long-term mispers are any case where the person has been missing for 28 days or more.

Amending review timetable

Principles

A DCI or SIO can amend the review timetable, if appropriate, e.g. in:

- High risk cases it may be appropriate for a DI review to be conducted every 24 hours; or
- Some long term cases where there are very few active enquiries and there is little change from day to day, it may be appropriate for the inspector's review to be conducted every seven days.

Any decision to amend the review timetable must be recorded in the policy log alongside the rationale for that decision and/or on the OEL.

Notifications and Circulations

UK Missing Persons Unit (UKMPU)

If a missing person has not returned within 72 hours of the initial report to the police, case details must be submitted by the District Safeguarding Unit to the MPU within the next 12 hours of all:

- Persons reported missing in the UK;

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- Foreign nationals reported (via Interpol or by any other means) as missing in the UK; and
- UK residents reported as missing abroad.

Where there is particular concern for the missing person, the case must be sent to the NCA Missing Person Unit immediately.

In such cases consideration must also be given to contacting the MPU directly via telephone.

In suspicious missing cases (e.g. potential missing/no-body murder cases), individuals must call the NCA Specialist Operations Centre (SOC) via telephone for crime-related investigative support.

Any significant case update for existing Unit submissions must be forwarded to the Unit within 48 hours.

Missing person cancellations must be submitted to the Unit within 24 hours of confirming the missing person's return or location.

Notifications will be made by email.

All reports of missing children and young persons will be referred to local authority children's services in accordance with local reporting arrangements.

All unidentified body/people reports must be sent to the MPU within 48 hours of discovery. This requirement is to help major crime investigations and bring closure to the families of missing people who are deceased. Cancellation of such reports must be submitted to the MPU within 24 hours of an identification being made.

See details of what the UKMPU can do to assist police investigations.

Please refer to the below forms:

UKMPU Missing Person Notification Form
UKMPU Missing Person Cancellation Form
UKMPU Unidentified Case Notification Form

**Non-
governmental
organisations**

District missing person co-ordinators must notify the relevant non-governmental agencies in accordance with the information sharing agreements that are current at the time of the initial report.

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Long Term Missing Persons

Principles

A long term missing person is defined within West Yorkshire Police as a person who has been missing in excess of 28 days.

Please refer to and use the below guidance and forms for long term missing persons:

Long Term Missing Persons Guidance

Long Term Missing Persons MPDD Submission Form

UKMPU Missing Person Notification Form

Persistent Missing Persons

Principles

A person will be considered as persistently missing if they go missing on:

- Four or more occasions within a month; or
- Six or more occasions within three months.

It is not necessary that all these incidents were reported to the police.

The Missing from Home Co-ordinator must consider missing incidents Fin Coded *689 – Located Not Missing* as counting towards the assessment of a persistent missing person.

Notifying the missing person co-ordinator

- If a police officer, member of police staff or a member of the local authority considers that a person meets the criteria, the district missing person co-ordinator must be notified, and a request made to create a report.
 - The below procedure must be followed.
-

District missing person co-ordinators

District missing person co-ordinators must:

- Monitor all missing occurrences. If a person meets the criteria, they must obtain an inspector's authority to forward a Misper 13 form to PNC cell to place a 'locate/information' report on PNC, using the most recent relevant occurrence number as a reference (this may be a Misper agency intervention occurrence). This will highlight to police officers who stop and check such a person that they may be missing from home.
- Ensure the Misper 13 includes details of a 24/7 contact number for the carer that the officer can use when checking flagged individuals to ensure that they are not currently missing.

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- Ensure that all locate/information reports are kept up to date and removed if the person does not go missing for a period of six months.
 - Review persons identified as being persistently missing, giving consideration to what multi-agency action is required to prevent repeat incidents and convene strategy discussions and planning meetings as appropriate, recording all such action on a Niche Misper agency intervention occurrence report.
 - Create a report, if requested by an officer, member of staff or a member of the local authority who considers that a person meets the criteria.
 - When placing a missing marker on PNC, consider:
 - Informing relevant Neighbourhood Policing Teams and response officers;
 - Creating a briefing item with photograph to inform response and NPT officers; and
 - Sending a photograph and details of the person to any appropriate CCTV control rooms with clear advice on when to contact the police if this person is seen.
-

PNC Cell

PNC Cell must:

- Create a locate/information report containing standard text:
 - Persistent missing person; and
 - Contact (name and telephone numbers of carer).
 - Notify the district missing person co-ordinator before the locate/information report is automatically weeded from PNC to:
 - Establish whether the 'persistent missing' criteria still apply; and, if so
 - Obtain authorisation of an Inspector to extend the report by 12 months.
-

Person with marker is checked

The officer must:

- Ensure the carer is contacted to check if the person is currently missing.
 - If currently missing, request the carer to arrange their return and finalise the missing report and PNC circulations other than the persistent missing marker.
 - If not currently missing, submit an intelligence report with details of the time, date and place stopped, any associates present, any vehicles used and any other relevant information.
-

Other Protocols

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Joint procedure and protocols

West Yorkshire Police has:

- Signed a joint protocol for children missing from home or local authority care with the five local authorities in the county. It describes how WYP will work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard children who may be missing from home. District missing person leads must raise concerns over another agency's level of response via Local Safeguarding Children's Boards or relevant local partnership working arrangements.
 - Agreed a protocol with:
 - The West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service regarding the deployment of WYFRS personnel to assist with searches for missing persons and, where appropriate, resources must be requested via the Force Duty Officer; and
 - Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust for the management of missing patients.
-

Transferring Ownership of the Report Between Districts/Forces

General

- 'Ownership' of the missing from home report and the direction of enquiries to locate the missing person **will remain with the police area which records the missing from home report** (usually where the report is first made) unless another police area accepts responsibility for the investigation.
-

Left the area

- It may be apparent that the missing person has left that area and is now likely to be in a different force or district area where the:
 - Majority of enquiries are likely to be made; and
 - Person is in fact believed to be.
 - The police area where the majority of enquiries are likely to be made must accept responsibility for managing the investigation. It is not efficient or effective for a police area to try and manage the majority of enquiries in another police area.
 - For example, a child placed in residential care in South Yorkshire may abscond and return to their home area in Keighley.
 - In this care, 'ownership' of the report and the responsibility for directing enquiries may be transferred from one police force or district to another as follows.
 - Note: For a child placed out of the area, the home local authority retains legal responsibility for the child and there is a need for the police to liaise with both the home local authority and the host local authority.
-

Transferring responsibility

Between West Yorkshire Police districts

- This may only be done in West Yorkshire where the Hub Commander or Duty Inspector in the receiving district has agreed to the transfer and the formal transfer has been recorded on the missing from home report.
- In cases where transfer is not agreed between Hub Commanders/Duty Inspectors, the matter must be referred to duty district Operational Commander/PACE cover.

Between forces

- Where it is proposed to transfer responsibility for managing an investigation between police forces, and there is a dispute over which force should accept primacy, the matter must be referred to an officer of at least chief inspector rank of the relevant district in WYP.
 - Other forces may have a different authority level.
 - Individuals must complete the Cross-border transfers form to request ownership be passed to another force.
-

Purpose of transfer

- The purpose of transferring is to improve the management and supervision of the investigation in order to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
-

Requesting Enquiries in Another District

Make request

To request for enquiries to be made in another WYP district, individuals must:

- Create a Storm log requesting the necessary enquiries and forward it to the appropriate DCR; and
 - Endorse the Niche MFH report that the enquiry has been requested.
-

Receiving district

The district receiving the request must:

- Action the request;
 - Endorse the original Storm log; and
 - Return it to the originating district's public enquiry counter.
-

Originating district's public enquiry counter

The public enquiry counter in the district which made the request must:

- Update Niche;
 - Notify the originating officer; and
 - Then close the log.
-

IMPORTANT

- Ownership of the report and responsibility for initiating and co-ordinating enquiries remains with the originating district unless ownership is formally transferred from one district to another as above.
-

Breach of Bail Hostel Curfew

Principles

- An individual that is avoiding the police or courts will be treated as a fugitive. A fugitive, however, will not usually cease all contact with family or loved ones and therefore **if a family or individual believes someone is missing whilst also wanted, we must consider the circumstances and decide whether they are both.**
 - If their status as a fugitive ceases and if they are still missing, the police need to be in a position to maintain the investigation as a missing case.
 - Where the person has breached a bail curfew or equivalent this will not be considered on its own to be a missing person episode unless information suggests there is some risk to the individual or public that cannot be negated by managing them as a fugitive.
 - Where an individual is considered both wanted and missing, there must be no duplication of effort and although there must be two incidents recorded on Niche, the investigation of the case must be managed on the Misper Occurrence and follow Misper processes.
 - The incident must be THRIVE'd and risk assessed.
 - Where no risk other than the suspect engaging in criminal behaviour exists, it must be recorded as "BAIL HOSTEL CURFEW" incident on Storm. The decision will be authorised by CCC Team Leader.
 - Call handlers will ensure the bail hostel is informed at the time they report it that the curfew breach is being recorded but that no police deployment will take place until the suspect is formally breached and circulated as wanted.
 - All curfew breaches will be passed to the appropriate district for information. This would then be tasked according to status of the offender, or closed.
 - Should further information become available that indicates the nominal has gone missing then a missing persons incident would be created and linked to the "BAIL HOSTEL CURFEW" incident.
-

Truancy

Principles

- For cases regarding truant children from school, please refer to the Truancy policy.

- If a child is reported missing from school during school hours, individuals must consider applying the Truancy policy.
 - If a child fails to return home from school after school hours as expected, or after being sent home from school, then consideration must be given to applying the Missing Persons policy.
-

Partnership Procedures

Planning procedures for care or support homes for children or adults

- West Yorkshire Police designating out crime officers (DOCOs) will scan weekly planning lists to look for relevant applications for homes for children or adults that may pose safeguarding concerns.
 - The DOCO will liaise with District Safeguarding Officers to consider making a joint formal objection and ensuring that WYP put on record any concerns had about the suitability of a care or support home being established in that area.
-

Locality Risk Assessment

Principles

- West Yorkshire Police will continue to support the Statutory OFSTED Locality Risk Assessment (LRA) process to ensure that risks to children are shared with managers of children's homes.
 - Partners will be advised on the WYP website that requests can be made to the Safeguarding Central Governance Unit (SCGU), who will allocate the request to the District Missing from Home Co-ordinator (or other locally agreed SPOC, for example NPT Support).
 - The individual completing the information sharing document will:
 - Provide information regarding the number and proximity of registered sex offenders living in the vicinity (personal details will not be shared);
 - Use the Safeguarding Maps App, and any other tools available, to provide any relevant information that will assist the Manager. This may include hotspots for child exploitation and anti-social behaviour; and
 - Direct the Manager to My Neighbourhood, where they can find NPT priorities and online crime mapping.See flowchart.
 - The request must be returned directly by district to the requesting person via email or letter, within two weeks. The report must be attached to Niche.
-

Recording on Niche

- An Information Sharing Occurrence must be recorded and in the Disp. Box 'Child related incident' must be recorded.
 - In the summary box, press F3 and select – Locality Risk Assessment.
 - Any other information, for example discussions with CSC or the manager of the home, must be recorded on the OEL.
 - Once complete, the Occurrence must be filed.
 - If further requests are made, a new Occurrence must be created each time.
-

Missing Abroad

**Interpol Yellow Notices/
Diffusions and Risk Assessments**

- If a missing person may have travelled abroad there are Interpol procedures that must be followed in order to ensure that appropriate circulations are made.
 - **Note:** Some notices and situations also require a risk assessment completing in addition to the notice which requires an Inspector's authority.
 - In order to assist operational officers the process has been arranged so that the PNC unit will notify and cancel the Interpol process alongside UK circulation procedures.
 - The documents can either be accessed through Force Forms or direct through the Niche Missing Person Occurrence.
-

Return Process

Communication Staff

- Communications staff must:
- Create a new incident log to ensure the response is timed.
 - Update the log with the circumstances of the return:
 - What time did the person return home or was located?
 - What addresses has the person visited whilst absent?
 - Who has the person been with?
 - Does the person have any injuries?
 - Has the person been subject of crime?
 - Is the reporting person concerned that the person may have been exploited, suffered harm whilst absent or exposed themselves to significant risk whilst absent?
 - Is there any further relevant information?
 - Grade as Immediate if the person is:
 - Currently exposed to immediate risk or poses an immediate risk; or
 - Is vulnerable or dangerous and is about to leave now.
 - Grade as Priority if the person is:

- Vulnerable and dangerous and is likely to go missing again before police attend.
 - Grade as Standard if the person:
 - Is not currently exposed to immediate risk;
 - Does not pose an immediate risk; and
 - Is not expected to go missing again before the police attend.
 - If a Philomena Protocol form (if a child in care), Herbert Protocol form (if the person is suffering from dementia) or Ellam Protocol form (if the person is suffering from a mental health illness) has previously been completed, advise the caller to update the form with details of this latest incident.
 - Refer the Storm log to the District Inspector to make decisions relating to:
 - Pushing the Storm log to Niche if it has not already been pushed;
 - The necessity of a prevention interview; and
 - If a prevention interview is required, the type of prevention interview to be held.
-

If the Person is Located BEFORE an Officer was Deployed and BEFORE the Storm Log was Pushed to Niche

Principles

- When the District Inspector is notified that a person has been located before an officer was deployed and before the Storm log was pushed to Niche, the District Inspector has two options:

Option 1 – To close the Storm log without a Prevention Interview and without pushing to Niche using the Storm Fin Code *Located – Not Missing (689)*.

Option 2 – To push the Storm log to Niche to create a Missing Person occurrence and arrange a Prevention Interview.

Option 1 – To close the Storm log using Fin Code Located – Not Missing (689)

- The District Inspector can authorise a Storm log to be closed under this option without a Prevention Interview and without pushing the Storm log to Niche if the following criteria apply:
 - The person was located prior to an officer being deployed and prior to the Storm log being pushed to Niche.
 - The reporting person has confirmed that the absent person has given a reasonable explanation as to why they were late home, or why they were not where they were expected to be, and the absent person has disclosed where they have been whilst absent.
 - The reporting person is not concerned that the person has been a victim of crime, has suffered harm, has been exploited, or been exposed to a significant risk whilst absent and the reporting person is

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satisfied with the explanation provided by the absent person as to where they have been whilst absent.

- The District Inspector is not concerned that the person has been a victim of crime, has suffered harm, has been exploited, or been exposed to a significant risk whilst absent and the District Inspector is satisfied with the explanation provided by the absent person as to where they have been whilst absent.
 - The key thing is that, with hindsight, everyone must be satisfied that the person has not suffered harm and was not exposed to a significant risk whilst absent and:
 - The person was just late home;
 - The person was just testing the boundaries; or
 - The person was safe and engaging in normal activities but has just failed to inform the reporting person of where they were.
 - Everyone must also agree that a prevention interview is unnecessary because, with hindsight, the circumstances and level of risk does not justify further police intervention and the person was not really missing.
 - The Storm log must be endorsed:
 - That the person was found prior to an officer being deployed and prior to the Storm log being pushed to Niche;
 - With an explanation of why the person was late home or not where they were expected to be;
 - With details of where the person was whilst absent;
 - With confirmation that both the reporting person and the District Inspector are not concerned that the person has been a victim of crime, has suffered harm, has been exploited, or been exposed to a significant risk whilst absent.
 - The Storm Fin Code Located – Not Missing (689) must be used so that these incident logs can be easily identified and audited to ensure that they were closed appropriately in accordance with this policy.
-

Option 2 – Record as missing person and arrange a prevention interview

- The above option must not be used to avoid recording an individual as missing simply because it is less work for the police, especially when there is a possibility the person may have been exploited whilst absent, suffered harm whilst absent or exposed themselves to significant risk.
- If:
 - There is any uncertainty or doubt;
 - The person is evasive and cannot provide a reasonable explanation for their absence;
 - The person is exhibiting post incident behaviour; or
 - The reporting person is concerned that the person may have been a victim of crime, may have suffered harm, may have been exploited, or may have exposed themselves to a significant risk whilst absent,

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then the Storm log **must** immediately be pushed to Niche and a prevention interview arranged.

If the Person is Located AFTER an Officer was Deployed and AFTER the Storm Log was Pushed to Niche

Principles

- If the Storm log was pushed to Niche, a NMM2 Missing Report (Prevention Interview) must be completed in all circumstances and attached to the occurrence, even if with hindsight the person had not really been missing.
 - The rationale for this policy is that the police had commenced a missing person investigation and created a missing person occurrence on Niche, and if that occurrence is not filed correctly, the occurrence will go into the Niche 'black hole' and create data issues.
 - However, the District Inspector still has discretion to decide the type of prevention interview that is appropriate to the circumstances of the case.
-

Types of prevention interview

The District Inspector must decide the type of prevention interview that is appropriate to the circumstances of the case. The options are:

- Officer to obtain details from the reporting person over the telephone.
- Officer to obtain details from the missing person (if an adult) over the telephone.
- Officer to conduct a prevention interview with the missing person via GoodSAM video consultation in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure – Missing Person Interviews.
- Trusted professional in another organisation to conduct the prevention interview and then an officer obtain details from the trusted professional over the telephone.
- Deploying an officer or PCSO to conduct the prevention interview in person.

Note: It will only be appropriate to conduct a prevention interview over the telephone if the criteria apply that would have allowed the District Inspector to close the Storm log as Code 689 without a prevention interview had the Storm log not already been pushed to Niche ([link to criteria](#)).

Note: It will only be appropriate for a trusted professional in another organisation to conduct the prevention interview on behalf of the police if this has previously been agreed with the partnership in a strategy meeting and that professional is available to conduct the prevention interview without undue delay. What is regarded as '*without undue delay*' must have been defined in the partnership strategy meeting.

Note: In deciding the type of prevention interview, the underlying principle is *'what is in the best interests of the missing person'* NOT *'what is most expedient for the police'*. It is recognised that when a person has only been absent a short period of time, there are no concerns about their absence, and with hindsight they were not really missing, unnecessary police contact can sometimes damage that person's relationship with their carers and the police. However, it is also recognised that when face-to-face meetings are not held, opportunities to establish where the missing person has been and whether they suffered harm whilst absent may be lost. The District Inspector must therefore decide what is in the best interests of the missing person and their future safeguarding. The rationale for this decision must be recorded.

Note: What is considered to be *'in the best interests of the missing person'* may not always coincide with *'what the missing person prefers'* although that is one factor that must be taken into account when decided the appropriate type of prevention interview.

Filing an Investigation when the Missing Person has been Located

Principles

The Investigating Officer must:

- Complete a prevention interview or obtain details to complete a prevention interview in accordance with the Inspector's direction.
- Complete the finalisation checklist which will send an automatic task to the district Missing from Home Co-ordinator who will review and file the occurrence.

The submission of the prevention interview from the handheld device will send an automatic task to PNC to cancel the missing person report.

Filing an Investigation when the Missing Person has not been Located

Principles

- The District Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy (NB: In this section, 'deputy' means a district superintendent/chief inspector with relevant experience as nominated by the District Commander as per below, **not** the Hub inspector)) can in certain circumstances authorise a missing person investigation to be filed even if the missing person has not been located.
- Investigations can be filed under the following options:
 - *'Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home'*

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- *'All reasonable enquiries completed'*
 - *'Found deceased'*
 - If the District Detective Chief Inspector decides to file an investigation when a missing person has not been located, there are two options:
 - **'Filed without Reviews'** – in this case the PNC circulation will be cancelled and the investigation will be filed completely.
 - **'Filed subject to Reviews'** – in this case the person remains circulated on PNC and is reviewed periodically by a senior officer.
 - The District Commander can nominate any of the District Superintendents and other District Chief Inspectors to deputise for the District Detective Chief Inspector if satisfied they have the relevant experience to make these decisions.
-

Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home

- The police are not a tracing agency and adults who are capable of independent living without care needs have a right to leave home and go missing. However, the police often need to conduct an initial investigation to confirm that the risk factors are low and that there are no suspicious or concerning circumstances.
- There will therefore be cases where the police have recorded individuals as missing and commenced an investigation, but the subsequent investigation has confirmed that the risk factors are low and indicates that the person decided to leave home.
- Once that has been established, it may no longer be justifiable and proportionate for the police to continue the investigation. It may be arguable that it is a breach of the missing person's Article 8 Right to a Private Life for the police to continue that investigation, especially when publicity is involved.
- In these cases, the District Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) can authorise the missing person investigation to be filed under the option *'Risk factors are low and the circumstances suggest the person has left home'*.
- The criteria for filing an investigation under this option are that proportionate enquiries have been completed and have established that:
 - The missing person is aged 16 or over;
 - The missing person is capable of independent living without care;
 - There are no suspicious or concerning circumstances;
 - There are no grounds to believe the missing person has suffered harm;
 - There is a low risk that the missing person will suffer harm;
 - There is a low risk that the missing person will cause harm to another person.
- The rationale for this decision must be recorded.
- If the reporting person and family agree that there are no suspicious or concerning circumstances and accept the police decision to discontinue the investigation, the missing person occurrence must be filed under the option **'Filed without Reviews'** and the PNC circulation cancelled.

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- If the reporting person or the family of the missing person does not agree that there are no suspicious or concerning circumstances and disagrees with the police decision to discontinue the investigation, the District Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) can still file the investigation but must do so under the option '**Filed subject to Reviews**'. The rationale for this policy is that some low-risk adult cases do result in unexpected fatal outcomes and as the family know the missing person far better than the police, their concerns must not therefore be entirely dismissed.
-

All reasonable enquiries completed

- Where a missing person has not been located, the District Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) may authorise a missing person investigation to be filed under the option '*All reasonable enquiries completed*'.
 - The criteria for filing an investigation under this option are that:
 - Taking into account the circumstances and risk assessment, all reasonable enquiries have been completed; and
 - It is **not** justifiable to continue to commit significant resources to the investigation.
 - Where there is concern that the missing person may have been a victim of a serious crime or may be deceased, an accredited (PIP level 3) SIO must be consulted and any recommendations of the SIO must be completed prior to finalisation.
 - These cases must be filed under the option '**Filed subject to Reviews**' and the missing person will remain circulated on PNC.
 - The case must be periodically reviewed by the District Chief Inspector (or approved deputy), and the reporting person or family, if available, must be contacted as part of the review to establish whether there is any new information or new developments that affect the risk assessment or generate new lines of enquiry.
 - If no further lines of enquiry are identified, the District Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) must set an appropriate date for a further review and record their rationale for the new review date.
 - Reviews will normally be set annually but this could be several years if appropriate. For example:
 - Where the person has been declared legally deceased; or
 - Where the person has been reported missing by an agency, and the police have no contact details for the family, and there is unlikely to be any meaningful lines of enquiry at the time of the review (e.g. an adult asylum seeker reported missing by Immigration Enforcement, especially when the real identity of the missing person is in doubt and there are no biometrics).
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- Found deceased**
- Where a missing person's body has been found and formally identified, the District Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) must file the occurrence as 'Found Deceased'.
 - A final report must be attached to the occurrence by the District Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) with confirmation that the body has been formally identified.
 - These cases must be filed under the option '**Filed without Reviews**' and the PNC circulation cancelled.
-

- District Inspector**
- If the missing person has not been located but the District Inspector considers an investigation should be filed under one of the permitted options, the District Inspector must update the OEL with their recommendation to file the investigation and their rationale for that recommendation.
 - The District Inspector must then request that the Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) reviews the case and considers authorising the occurrence to be filed.
-

- District Senior Leadership Team**
- The Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) must then consider whether to authorise the missing person investigation to be filed under one of the permitted options and, if so, consider whether the investigation should be '**Filed without Reviews**' or '**Filed with Reviews**'.
 - The Detective Chief Inspector (or approved deputy) must endorse the OEL with their decision and record their rationale. They must ensure that sufficient information is recorded on the OEL to demonstrate that the relevant criteria have been met so that their decision can withstand subsequent scrutiny.
-

Hostel Policy

- Principles**
- This policy only applies to hostels and supported living accommodation where the person is under no legal obligation to remain at the hostel and they are free to leave at any time. If the person is under a legal obligation to remain at the hostel, then consideration must be given to whether the person should be recorded as missing or wanted.
- Some hostels and supported living accommodation have a policy whereby they report a resident as missing if they leave the accommodation without informing staff beforehand and they do not return within a specified time.
 - Often these individuals have mental health issues, autism, alcohol or drug addictions, or other vulnerabilities.

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- Sometimes they will expose themselves to additional risks by returning to live on the street.
- However, these individuals are under no obligation to stay at the hostel and have a right to leave even if they expose themselves to increased risk by doing so.
- If the police locate such an individual, the police have no power to intervene and must rely on persuasion to convince the person to return to the hostel or the supported living accommodation.
- It is not the responsibility of the police to locate homeless people to persuade them to return to accommodation and seek support. Outreach workers and other agencies will fulfil that function. There is fundamentally no difference in the police duty towards an individual who has been reported missing by a hostel and our duty towards all other homeless people who have not been reported missing by anyone.
- If we come across a homeless person whilst on patrol, or whilst dealing with an incident, we will refer the person to support agencies as appropriate, but there is no duty to actively search for homeless people who have made the decision to leave home, no matter how unwise that decision may be.
- In seeking to find the balance between protecting vulnerable adults and respecting an adult's Article 8 Right to Respect for their Private and Family Life, when a hostel or supported living accommodation report an individual as missing to the police, the District Inspector can authorise the Storm log to be closed if the following criteria apply:
 - The missing person is an adult.
 - The missing person is capable of independent living.
 - The circumstances suggest that the person has decided to leave their current accommodation.
 - There are no reasonable grounds to believe the individual is a victim of criminal exploitation and has been pressurised or coerced to leave.
 - There are no suspicious circumstances.
 - The behaviour is not out of character as the individual has a transient, chaotic lifestyle.
 - Whilst the individual may have some vulnerabilities (e.g. autism, drugs /alcohol addiction or mental health issues) these are not such that the police will have a power to intervene under the Mental Health Act or the Mental Capacity Act.
- However, it is important that before authorising the Storm log to be closed, the District Inspector completes a bespoke risk assessment taking into account:
 - What the reporting person says about the individual;
 - The particular circumstances of the incident; and
 - Relevant information and intelligence recorded on West Yorkshire Police systems.

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- The District Inspector must not assume that there are no suspicious or concerning circumstances, simply because the report has been received from a hostel, without considering the information and intelligence presented.
- If a decision is made to close the Storm log under this policy, the Inspector must record the rationale for their decision on the Storm log using the NDM (these incidents will usually be closed under Fin Code 665 – *Concern for Safety*).
- The Inspector must make it absolutely clear to the reporting person that WYP intend to take no action unless the situation changes.
- Should further information be received from the reporting person that impacts upon the risk, then the incident must be reviewed.

Note: If the incident falls outside of the above criteria, the incident must be dealt with under the Missing Persons policy.

Hospital/Healthcare Walkout Policy

Principles

- This policy only applies to adults and does not apply to persons aged 17 or under.
- Where an adult is reported to have left a place of assessment or treatment by a Hospital or NHS Trust without notifying staff at that location, they will not be recorded as a missing person or require a police deployment unless there is an **immediate, real and substantial risk** to the life and/or of serious injury to the person or any other person if they are not found.
- The risk can arise in any way but would include matters such as due to a lack of necessary medical treatment or medication, the person's age or other vulnerability, their mental health, inability to care for themselves, risk of self-harm or suicide and also the risk that they pose to other persons.
- The information that establishes the risk may come from Hospital staff, police information and any other source.
- Where hospital staff notify the police of an adult having left a Hospital/ NHS facility they must be asked whether there is an **immediate, real and substantial risk** to that person or any other person. If there is such a risk, the hospital staff must be asked to clarify the nature of that risk and why it is thought to exist.
- Where a risk is identified the hospital staff must be asked to supply any contact details and any other information in its possession that may help in locating the person.
- In making this assessment all available information must be considered, including a thorough check of WYP systems.

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- Where the adult is suffering from a mental health illness or was waiting for a mental health assessment, the mental health trust must be consulted to inform the risk assessment.
- If the incident falls outside of the above criteria it must be recorded as a “Concern for Welfare” incident and closed as “other agency dealing” pending further information that confirms them as missing.
- The organisation reporting the incident must be told that no police deployment will occur and given a reference number in the event that further information becomes available.

Key points:

- Call takers in initial contact are the gatekeepers for this policy. In October 2023, WYP launched its programme of ‘Right Care, Right Person’ to which this policy and the Welfare Checks policy align. The aim is to provide the best care to the public by ensuring the most appropriate response to calls for service. This reduces stress on the police and health services responding to these requests.
- Should further information be received that impacts upon the risk then the incident must be reviewed and assessed.
- Whilst there is no requirement to request an ambulance for every healthcare walkout, it would be good practice to request an ambulance (if medical issue) or a mental health professional (if mental health issue) to deploy to the home address as many patients return home and ambulance/mental health professionals are the most appropriate resources to deal with what is essentially a medical or mental health issue. The position is that where there is an Article 2 or Article 3 duty, all statutory agencies have that legal duty. When a patient leaves hospital without being formally discharged, if there is a real, immediate and substantial risk to life or serious injury (in most cases there is not), then the most appropriate agency to respond is an ambulance or a mental health professional. Ambulance or mental health professionals must therefore always be asked to deploy to the home address in line with the Right Care, Right Person principles. **However, it is important to emphasize that if ambulance and mental health refuse or are unable to deploy, the police must not also refuse to deploy, as the failures of ambulance/mental health and their breach of their legal duty will not negate the police duty.**
- See Right Care, Right Person iLearn.

Hospital responsibilities

Hospitals have been advised that before contacting the police service in respect of a patient who has absconded from or otherwise left Hospital/Trust premises, the following criteria must all be present:

- There exists an immediate, real and substantial risk to the patient or another person if they are not brought back for medical assessment and/or other treatment.

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- The risk is such that action needs to be taken with urgency.
 - Efforts to contact the patient by telephone have failed.
 - No other person or service is able to facilitate the return of the patient.
 - Both the nurse in charge and the senior doctor on duty are in agreement that contacting the police is the correct course of action.
 - Where the police are contacted they should be told as much information as is known about the risk to the patient and whether there is a risk to any other person.
 - Any information known to the hospital about the person's likely whereabouts or other contact information should be passed to the police.
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Additional Information

Compliance

This policy complies with the following legislation and guidance:

- Data Protection Act 2018
 - Department for Education statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care
 - Department for Education guidance on safeguarding children who may have been trafficked
 - Home Office guidance for frontline officers about victims of human trafficking
 - APP Investigation
 - APP Major investigation and public protection – Missing persons
 - Joint protocol between WYP and five local authorities on children missing from home or local authority care
 - Missing Persons Operational Guidance
 - NCA Parental Child Abduction Guidance 2022
 - NPCC/CoP Advice for safeguarding children through use of a child abduction warning notice
 - NCA Child Rescue Alert operational guidance 2020
 - Department for Education Childrens Homes Regulations Amendments 2014
 - MET Police – Misper transfer request to the MET from other Forces
 - NPCC Advice to Police Forces on Police Duties and Powers to Return a Missing Person Home when Found
 - NPCC Advice to Police Forces on Adult Asylum Seekers, Undocumented Migrants and Visa Applicants who Abscond and when they should be Recorded as Missing
 - NPCC Guidance to Police Forces on Missing Migrant Children
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Related policy procedures and other useful links

Child Sexual Exploitation policy
 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy
 Regional Underwater Search Unit
 UK Missing Persons Unit
 Child Abduction Warning Notices policy
 Truancy policy
 Welfare Checks Deployment Procedure policy
 Crime Recording and Finalisation policy

Parental Child Abduction – Update

Please see the important note issued stating a change in process and contact details for parental child abduction.
 The National Ports Office is no longer operating and the function to circulate the details of a child believed to be at risk of being taken out of the country

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by a parent, in contravention of the Child Abduction Act now sits with the National Border Targeting Centre.

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