



Missing Persons Policy

Policy summary:	<i>The purpose of this document is to ensure that Dyfed-Powys Police has a consistent and professional approach to policing incidents of missing persons in line with the College of Policing Authorised professional Practice for Missing Persons</i>
Policy number:	028/2021
Version control:	Version: 10.0 Date: 23/09/2023 Author: [REDACTED] Rationale: Review of policy and amendment. A full version control is available here.
Date implemented:	23/09/2023
Review date:	23/09/2024
Owner/contact:	CID – Vulnerability Hub
Approval	Board: Strategic Vulnerability Board Date of approval: 23/11/2022
Final Approval	Board: Strategic Vulnerability Board Date of approval: 23/11/2022
Consultation and approval	[REDACTED]
Welsh Translation	No



1. Statement of Policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure that Dyfed Powys Police has a consistent and professional approach to dealing with Missing Persons. Dyfed Powys Police will equip its staff to recognise and respond quickly and effectively to protect those at risk of harm.

This policy will be made available for all staff to follow during the course of their duties and offices will be provided specific localised procedure guidance in line with College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice on missing person investigations.

Applies to (but not limited to): All categories of Dyfed-Powys Police employees, whether full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term, temporary (including agency staff, associates and contractors) or seconded staff. Any employee accessing and using Force assets and property must have due regard to the contents of this policy

The principles of this policy will be followed by all staff when dealing with the pattern of reporting, responding to and investigating reports of missing persons. Dyfed Powys police guidance will provide details of the responsibilities of all parties involved in the conduct and management of investigations, from first contact with an employee of Dyfed Powys to the conclusion of the investigation and any post missing episode safeguarding referrals all of which is available on the internal intranet site.

2. Policy Scope

This policy is implemented force-wide. The force procedure/guidance to this policy is a separate document which provides detailed guidance to officers and staff. The policy and procedure documents are available to all members of staff.



The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner should legislation and guidance change. It should be clearly documented if the guidance within this document is not adhered to along with the rationale.

Dyfed Powys Police recognises the impact that missing person incidents can have on the lives of those reported as missing and their families. Going missing should be treated as an indicator that the individual may be at risk of harm. The safeguarding of vulnerable people is paramount to Dyfed Powys Police and a missing person report should be recognised as an opportunity to identify and address risks.

This will be achieved by:-

- Responding to all incidents of reported missing persons
- Undertaking a risk assessment in respect of each missing person
- Recognising the risk and responding appropriately to protect anyone perceived to be at risk
- Ensuring police resources are targeted appropriately and effectively to investigate reports of missing persons.
- Standardising procedures throughout the force area
- Adopting a multi-agency approach to missing persons in the region
- Provide support to the family of missing persons.
- Being Pro-Active through engagement with high-risk groups such as children in residential care.

Three key factors should be considered in a missing person investigation:

- protecting those at risk of harm
- minimising distress and ensuring high quality of service to the families and carers of missing persons



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- prosecuting those who perpetrate harm or pose a risk of harm when this is appropriate and supported by evidence.

The safety and wellbeing of missing persons is paramount. Failure to identify and appropriately grade risks at the earliest opportunity could have serious consequences.

Investigation and Review Timings

DETECTIVE SUPERVISOR		
High = Immediately Low and medium = at 48 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review • Risk assess • Quality assurance actions • Set actions • Confirm parameters • Make management and ownership recommendations 	Set future review dates as appropriate
SENIOR DETECTIVE		
At 28 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review • Risk assess • Quality assurance actions • Set actions • Confirm parameters • Make management and ownership recommendations • Ensure case ready to move to long term 	Set future review dates as appropriate
COMMAND TEAM		
Aware of appropriate missing's at tasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee investigations • Determine to whom the investigation will be owned and managed • Facilitate supply of resources • Ensure compliance with policy 	Document decisions on Compact
SENIOR OFFICER		
At 3, 6 and 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review • Risk assess • Quality assurance actions • Set actions • Confirm parameters • Make management and ownership recommendations • At 12 months, ensure case is ready to move to inactive 	Set future review dates as appropriate



Review Frequency

Type	Time
Duty Sergeant/Inspector	At handover. Once all active enquiries have been exhausted a documented decision should be made of the frequency and value of future Sgt/Insp reviews
Detective Inspector	At 48 hrs Immediately for high risk
PVPU Detective	At the earliest opportunity for appropriate cases
Detective Chief Inspector	At 28 days
Chief Inspector	At 3 months, 6 months then annually

3. Powers and Policy/Legal Requirements

Dyfed Powys Police will police all incidents of missing persons in line with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice for Missing Persons (APP).

[College of Policing – Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\) – Missing Persons](#)

The definition of a missing person is :-



“Anyone whose whereabouts are unknown whatever the circumstances of disappearance. They will be considered missing until located and their wellbeing or otherwise established.”

In line with the APP, Dyfed Powys Police have accepted the continuum of risk however the force has not accepted the “no apparent risk” grading.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) places a positive obligation on police officers to take reasonable action, within their powers, to safeguard the rights of individuals who may be at risk.

The ECHR Articles which may be relevant to missing persons are:

- right to life (Article 2)
- right not to be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 3)
- right to prohibition of slavery and forced labour (Article 4)
- right to respect for private and family life (Article 8)
- right to freedom of expression, including freedom to receive information (Article 10).

Positive action

When a person is reported missing the police have an obligation to record the incident and ensure that positive action is taken to risk-assess and safeguard the individual. Safeguarding actions may be undertaken by the police or others, and must be clearly documented with the rationale. An initial risk assessment will provide the basis for an appropriate and proportionate response according to the level of risk to the individual and others.

It is also important to consider whether the person has a particular vulnerability that may increase their risk, such as:



- having a disability or illness
- being a looked after child or at risk of exploitation
- having any other protected characteristic (defined by the Equality Act 2010) which may require a particular response or consideration.

A person may be vulnerable for a wide range of other reasons, these might for example relate to their immediate environment or mental wellbeing, difficulties within their life or challenges that they have that affect their behaviour or ability to communicate or seek help.

4. Options and Contingencies

The responsibility for delivery of this policy lies with Local Policing Area Commander and the Detective Chief Inspector who is responsible for the following:

- The knowledge, implementation and compliance of this policy with their staff.
- The identification of suitable officers to undertake training and roles required for the specialist investigation.
- The investigation, safeguarding and supporting of vulnerable people considered adults at risk in their geographical area

The following Code of Ethics principles apply:

- **Accountability** – We will be answerable for the decisions, actions and omissions made in relation to the application of this policy.
- **Fairness** – This policy will be implemented regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender.
- **Honesty** – We will apply the contents of this policy with honesty to maintain the trust of the community we serve.



- **Integrity** – We will apply this policy ensuring we are striving to do the best we can for the more vulnerable members of our communities.
- **Objectivity** – The application of this policy will be based upon evidence and best professional judgement.
- **Openness** – We will be open and transparent in our actions and decisions.
- **Respect** – We will treat all members of the community with respect and maintain the dignity.
- **Selflessness** – We will act selflessly in the best public interest.

5. Take action and review

Our progress is reviewed regularly within the Strategic Vulnerability Board which provides governance and oversight, ensuring that the strategic approach and response to vulnerability is fully embedded within the organisation.

The group is chaired by the force Assistance Chief Constable, and reports to the Chief Constable at the Force Performance Board.

The Strategic Vulnerability Group will continue to monitor effectiveness, focusing on continuous learning in this area.

The NPCC National Vulnerability Action Plan provides clear direction and focus. Our progress against this plan is reviewed regularly within the Force Vulnerability Portfolio meeting.

Regular reviews and audits of incident logs, records and decision making is carried out to ensure we are in compliance with all legislation and guidance listed in section 3 of this document.



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the **protected characteristics** that qualify for protection under the Act as follows: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation.

The **public sector equality duty** places a proactive legal requirement on public bodies to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The equality duty applies to all protected characteristics with the exception of Marriage and Civil Partnership, to which only the duty to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination applies.

Carrying out an **equality impact assessment** involves systematically assessing the likely or actual effects of policies on people in respect of all the protected characteristics set out above. An equality impact assessment should be carried out on any policy that is **relevant** to the public sector equality duty. An equality impact assessment template is available [here](#).



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Name:	[REDACTED]
Department:	CID- Vulnerability Hub
Signed:	[REDACTED]
Date:	23/09/2023

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the Human Rights Act and has been reviewed on the basis of its content and the supporting evidence and it is deemed compliant with that Act and the principles underpinning it.

Name:	[REDACTED]
Department:	Legal Services
Signed:	[REDACTED]
Date:	9 December 2022

CODE OF ETHICS CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the Code of Ethics and has been reviewed on the basis of its content and the supporting evidence and it is deemed compliant with that Code and the principles underpinning it.

Name:	[REDACTED]
Department:	CID- Vulnerability Hub
Signed:	[REDACTED]
Date:	23/09/2023



CORPORATE FINANCE REVIEW

No changes to this policy will incur any financial cost other than to amend, improve or formalise business as usual practices that are affordable and within budget. Any policy change affecting financial cost must be discussed with the Corporate Finance department in advance of seeking approval of this policy. Please sign to confirm that the financial impact of this policy area has been considered and that Corporate Finance have been notified of any change, if applicable.

Name:	██████████
Department:	CID- Vulnerability Hub
Signed:	██████████
Date:	23/09/2023


Freedom of Information Act 2000

Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 places a requirement upon the Force to publish all policies on the Force website. Policies are why we do things and procedures are how we do them. A case-by-case review of procedures must be undertaken to protect law enforcement and health and safety considerations. Where a combined policy and procedure document is being produced the Force is legally required to publish the policy section and assess the procedure part to ensure no sensitive information is published. Generally the default position shall be that a policy and accompanying procedure document will be produced separately.

There is a requirement therefore to review this document to establish its suitability for publication. Please identify below whether the document is suitable for publication in its entirety or not. Where it is believed that disclosure will be harmful please articulate the harm that publication would cause and highlight the relevant sections within the document. Where it is perceived that there is harm in disclosure the document should be forwarded to the Disclosure Unit for review.



Suitability for publication

Suitability for publication	Yes/No	Date	Signature
Document is suitable for publication in its entirety	Yes	23/09/2023	
Document is suitable for publication in part, I have identified those sections which I believe are not suitable for disclosure and have articulated below the harm which would be caused by publication.			

Outline of any harm identified in publication:

FOI review – to be completed by Disclosure Unit

(Only required if author believes there is any harm in disclosure)

Suitability for publication	Yes/No	Date	FOI Decision Maker
Document is suitable for publication in its entirety			
Document is suitable for disclosure in part and relevant redactions have been applied. A public facing version has been created.			

Once review has been undertaken, FOI Disclosure Officer to return document to policy author and following sign-off, document to be published within Force Publication Scheme. Any future changes to the document should be brought to the attention of the Policy Officer and the Disclosure Unit, as appropriate.



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Full Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Rationale
7	01/03/2018	[REDACTED]	Review Policy and amend the reviewing officer at 28 days to Force SIO.
8	01/02/2021	[REDACTED]	Review of policy and amendment.
9	23/11/2022	[REDACTED]	Review of policy.
10	23/09/2023	[REDACTED]	Amendment following NICHE implementation.