



## Missing Person 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:	<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
	8	01/02/2021	[REDACTED]	<i>Review of policy and amend to current guidance.</i>
	7	01/03/2018	DCI [REDACTED]	<i>Review Policy and amend the reviewing officer at 28 days to Force SIO.</i>
Date implemented:	01/02/2021			
Review date:	One year from published date.			
Owner/contact: (approved by –Board)	Vulnerability Hub			
Consultation and approval	Detective Superintendent [REDACTED] DCI [REDACTED]			
Welsh Translation	Yes	✓	No	



## 1. Statement of Policy

The aim of the policy 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. All officers and staff will understand their responsibilities when dealing with incidents of missing persons in order to reduce the risk of harms to individuals who are missing.

This will be achieved by:-

- Responding to all incidents of reported missing persons and that each report is risk assessed.
- 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.
- Adopt a multi-agency approach to missing persons in the region.
- Provide support to the family of missing persons.

The policy applies to all categories of Dyfed-Powys Police employees, whether full time, part time, permanent, fixed term, temporary (including agency staff) or seconded staff.

## 2. Policy Scope

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 and a missing person report should be recognised as an opportunity to identify and address risks. The reasons for a person deciding to



go missing may be complex and linked to a variety of social, environmental or medical issues.

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

The above principles are everybody's business and Dyfed-Powys 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 Authorised Professional Practice on missing person investigations from the College of Policing.

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.

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

### **3. Powers and Policy/Legal Requirements**

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 Authorised Professional Practice 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.

## 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](#). A welsh version of the equality impact assessment template is also available [here](#). Guidance on how to complete the template can be found on the diversity intranet page.

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<b>Equality Impact Assessment Completed</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	██████████
<b>Department:</b>	CID- Vulnerability Hub
<b>Signed:</b>	██████████
<b>Date:</b>	14/12/20

## 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.

<b>Name:</b>	██████████
<b>Department:</b>	Legal Services
<b>Signed:</b>	██████████
<b>Date:</b>	16 January 2021

## 4. Options and Contingencies

This policy will be owned by CID- PVP.

It will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and make necessary amendments in relation to changes and updates in related legislation and guidance.

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Approval decisions regarding the implementation of this policy will be made by the Detective Superintendent of Protecting Vulnerable People and the Strategic Vulnerability Group.

Scrutiny and audit of force records is regularly carried out to ensure Dyfed Powys Police have acted accordingly to safeguard and seek support for vulnerable persons where necessary.

**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.



**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.

<b>Name:</b>	██████████
<b>Department:</b>	Vulnerability Hub
<b>Signed:</b>	██████████
<b>Date:</b>	14/12/2021

## 5. Take action and review

Our progress is reviewed regularly within the Strategic Vulnerability Group 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 Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of CID, and reports to the Assistant Chief Constable and into 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 Strategic Vulnerability Group.

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.



**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	✓	14/12/2020	
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.			
<b>Harm – in publication</b>			

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**FOI review – to be completed by Disclosure Unit**

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

<b>Suitability for publication</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>FOI Decision Maker</b>
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 Disclosure Unit, as appropriate.			