



Missing Persons Investigations Policy and Procedure (Surrey)

Abstract

This document details how Surrey Police will respond to missing person reports.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy exists to ensure that Surrey Police

- a. Identify immediate and serious risk of harm, or crime which can be associated with missing person reports.
- b. Assess, manage, and investigate missing person reports and the associated risk.
- c. Record every missing person report diligently, to allow for effective risk and task management and inform safeguarding teams as to the investigation undertaken.
- d. Comply with the standards (unless otherwise stated in this policy) laid out in the missing persons Approved Professional Practice (APP) written by the College of Policing.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure will outline the role and responsibilities for officers and staff who respond to missing person reports. It allows for the identification of whether or not a person will be regarded or recorded as a missing person.

3. Policy Statement

This policy will be available to officers and staff via the force policy site found on the intranet. Policies are published externally in accordance with the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 unless publication / dissemination to individuals outside of the force could cause an operational risk to the organisation or their officers and staff.

[Missing Person Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\)](#) will be followed by Surrey Police unless there is a described deviation stated in this policy.

4. Definitions

4.1 A missing person has been defined as (College of Policing APP, 2016) “Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.” This is a broad definition, intended to ensure that all cases of people suspected of being missing who are reported to the police are considered for a policing response. The nature of the response is for operational decision makers. Not all reports of missing people will require immediate deployment of police resources.

4.2 All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from low risk through to high risk cases that require immediate, intensive action. All should be viewed as missing persons and the appropriate response initiated. Risk of serious harm has been defined as (Home Office, 2002) “A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.”

4.3 The definition of a critical incident is (HM Government, 2025) “A local critical incident is where the outcome or consequence of that incident is likely to result in:

- a. serious harm to any individual
- b. significant community or business impact
- c. significant impact on the confidence of the public in IE, BF, CS or IMIU
- d. requiring specialist resources to support the management of the incident”

4.4 All critical incidents must be escalated to the Force Silver, to allocate further resources, and manage and investigate until the person is found.

5. Positive action and risk assessment

5.1 The police should seek to make people safe. APP states that “A missing person report may be the first report of a serious crime or of a person being at significant risk of harm.” The vast majority of people do not go missing, therefore a failure to record and investigate a report of a missing person properly may lead to:

- a. individuals being put at risk
- b. the loss of opportunity to reduce potential harm
- c. the police service being vulnerable to a legal challenge under either the human rights obligations (including the ECHR) or the civil law relating to negligence
- d. reputational damage for the police force concerned.

5.2 The Risk Principles and the [National Decision Model \(NDM\)](#) must be considered and applied to any missing person investigation, along with risk assessments including THRIVE. A THRIVE assessment considers the intent to cause harm, the potential damage, who is being threatened and any vulnerabilities, likelihood of that threat, the emergency response required and whether the police are the best agency to respond, potential serious offences taking place, suspects at the scene or potential evidence lost. The professionalism of call handlers is crucial to the interaction with victims and helps clarify what action is being taken. The call handler will ask a number of probing questions to reveal the circumstances and ensure that there is no delay in the deployment of resources. Please refer to the Deployment of Resources Procedure and call grading for further information.

5.3 This then leads to a Missing Person risk assessment (as outlined in the table below). APP states that “When a person is reported missing the police should risk-assess and safeguard the individual when necessary. 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”.

5.4 The missing risk assessment is part of a continuum of risk, therefore the level will be subject to change throughout an investigation, as it is based on current information and evidence at that time (alternatively it may be based on a gap in current information). For those at continuous risk of harm, the level of risk and the required response can fluctuate across several missing

episodes. Therefore, a risk assessment must be undertaken at regular intervals, when circumstances either change or become prolonged. The risk associated with a missing person will be categorised as either low, medium or high, as defined in the table below. **Surrey Police do not use** the 'Very low risk' category as defined in APP, or the term 'absent' as defined in previous guidance.

Risk of harm		
Low	Medium	High
Possible but minimal	Likely but not serious	Serious harm is very likely

5.5 The missing risk assessment template asks if there is an indication of serious harm such as misuse of substances, suicide, exploitation, radicalisation, and police must always evaluate whether the missing report is hiding a serious crime such as murder, rape, abduction, kidnapping, extortion, extremism, stalking, coercive control, forced marriage, honour abuse, human trafficking, or slavery and these crimes can occur whilst the person is missing. If so, these crimes must be escalated to the correct senior officer and be recorded and investigated following a missing report.

5.6 Vulnerability to serious harm is another consideration of the missing risk assessment, and factors such as frailty, illness, disability, neurodiversity can affect someone's ability to remain safe or interact with others. Individual factors such as increased stress or trauma, debt, grief, unstable housing, homelessness, poverty, educational exclusion, linguistic barriers, social isolation and racial segregation can all play a part in vulnerability and may increase the chances of serious harm. Even situational factors such as extreme temperatures, weather warnings, or someone's ability to navigate the landscape safely must also form part of a missing risk assessment, where applicable. Officers and decision makers are encouraged to seek advice from community liaison officers and interpreters when assessing risk or when establishing an engagement plan.

6. Golden hour

6.1 Officers must remain alert to primary investigation considerations. A missing report may indicate a potential crime scene, and early engagement should be guided by the principles of the 'golden hour'; securing evidence promptly to maximise investigative opportunities and preserve forensic integrity. This includes documenting initial accounts, safeguarding physical evidence, and ensuring that any immediate risks to the individual or others are addressed without delay.

The golden hour is the period immediately following a missing person report, when positive action must be taken. This includes protecting, preserving, or gathering material that may otherwise be concealed, lost, damaged, altered, destroyed or faded over time. Effective action during the golden hour will increase the opportunity to identify suspects, protect victims and witnesses and help to secure positive criminal justice outcomes. The first officer to attend will begin the investigation, conduct appropriate searches and reassess the level of risk at the scene (last known whereabouts).

6.2 Judgements made at this point may have an impact on the effectiveness of the investigation. How the investigation is conducted in the first few hours, after the report is made to the police

may affect the outcome. Although most missing person enquiries do not lead to a major crime investigation, but where they do, early identification of a major crime investigation is crucial. A missing person report can be the first sign of a serious crime or possibly a sign that one is about to occur, so it is important that this stage in the investigation be completed thoroughly, and to the maximum of police ability.

7. Missing children

7.1 A report of a missing child can be the first sign that something is wrong in their life and all missing episodes must be viewed as a symptom of another concern, this can include circumstances where the child is being abused at home or groomed for a sexual purpose and/or has previously been a victim or witness to child rape or sexual assault.

7.2 APP states that “The police are entitled to expect parents and carers, including staff acting in a parenting role in children care homes, to accept normal parenting responsibilities and undertake reasonable actions to try and establish the whereabouts of the individual. Children who are breaching parental discipline should not be dealt with by police unless there are other risks. For example, a child who is late home from a party should not be regarded as missing until the parent or carer has undertaken enquiries to locate the child. This includes children in care who are deemed to be ‘absent without authorisation’ as defined within the [Department for Education Statutory Guidance on children who go missing from home or care](#).”

7.3 Reasonable steps that parents and carers could be expected to undertake, prior to calling the police are:

- a. contact the child by phone / online media to establish their whereabouts
- b. contact family or friends in search for the child
- c. visit places where the child often goes, or has gone to previously
- d. check to see if there are items taken from the home.

7.4 The missing question set asks the caller what reasonable steps have already been undertaken. The answers inform a risk assessment and initial lines of enquiry, and (where appropriate), further advice can be offered, about what steps could be reasonably undertaken. This advice could be offered during the first call, or after the initial risk assessment or at the scene or at any other point during the investigation. However, any advice must be recorded, be in the child’s best interest, and in keeping with the individual who has made the report. This is because a family or carer may have additional needs or vulnerabilities which prevent or limit them in carrying out these steps and they may require additional help. Police also have role to respond to share relevant information with other services to assist them in keeping a child safe.

7.5 The police have a statutory obligation to safeguard children, under [Section 11 of the Children Act 2004](#). It is not always obvious when a missing child report becomes part of a complex child abuse investigation, therefore a missing report is an opportunity to identify harm and crime from the outset and is a useful way to disrupt offender activity and increase safeguarding measures to help protect children. A thorough missing person investigation must be completed in all cases where concern for a child is reported. When police have information that indicates a missing child is or has previously been a victim, witness or suspect of crime, then police decision making must remain child centred and have the child’s best interests in all lines of enquiry.

7.6 Police must always have an open mindset when carrying out a missing person investigation and consider the reason for a child being reported missing and whether there is any evidence to consider any offences of child abduction, kidnapping or other crime in action, this includes

children in care. In these cases, escalate to the duty DI or Force Silver. For further guidance see the Abduction and kidnapping Procedure Police must consider the reason for the child becoming missing and whether they have been taken, sent, kept away, encouraged or incited to go or stay away from a parent or carer. If there are reasonable grounds to suspect this, then a crime will be recorded, and the Abduction and Kidnapping Procedure must be followed. Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN) can be an effective disruption strategy to sever contact between children and individuals who may wish to exploit or coerce them. It is vital that careful consideration is given to the issuing of a CAWN, for further information see CAWN guidance (see also section 13.4 Triggers Plans).

7.7 Police will relentlessly pursue perpetrators of harm and crime, but **Children will not be dealt with as wanted** if they are reported as a missing person, a missing person investigation must take priority (see further below [16. Wanted Persons](#)).

7.8 Child exploitation is child abuse and it's important to recognise that although the age of consent is 16 years old, children and young people over 16 can be exploited. Child sexual exploitation is a very complex form of abuse, and it can be difficult for parents and carers to understand, and it can be hard for the child or young person to acknowledge that they are being exploited. A child doesn't always know what is happening is wrong or are unable to tell anyone due to fear, intimidation and violence.

7.9 Child sexual exploitation is defined as ([HM Government, 2016](#)) "Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology."

7.10 Child criminal exploitation is defined as ([Serious Violence Strategy, 2018](#)) "Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology." It is important to recognise that criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft. However, many of the characteristics of county lines exploitation will be present in other forms of child criminal exploitation. Likewise, victims of county lines may also experience other overlapping forms of exploitation, such as sexual, in addition to criminal.

8. Missing children from care (or supported accommodation) and missing vulnerable adults

8.1 Children or vulnerable adults which are living in care, or adults which are receiving specialist healthcare can more often be reported as a missing person, as they are in care for a reason and have complex additional needs and staff and carers may require the help of police in some circumstances, to reduce harm and/or to report a crime.

8.2 It is the role of police to establish the nature of the concern, risk assess the likelihood of harm or identify crime and provide a timely and proportionate police response. APP states "Investigating matters that are recorded as missing person reports is the responsibility of the police, but those involved in the care of children and vulnerable adults also have a safeguarding

duty". This means whilst other services have a role in safeguarding those in care, to notify other services of previous missing episodes, and undertake steps to locate a person (if whereabouts cannot be established), the police furthermore have a role to assist in finding them once these steps have been completed. The role of police is to ensure the missing person has not come to serious harm or crime, return them to a safe location for continued safeguarding and share information with other services regarding the circumstances so they may engage additional or alternative safeguarding, following a missing person report. The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) have published national frameworks which provide further guidance on these circumstances, particularly when responding to vulnerable adults, children in care, or children in supported accommodation.

8.3 Surrey Police have local agreements to support and embed multi-agency responses to missing persons receiving additional care in Surrey. They outline what Surrey Police expect of staff and those in caring roles to undertake prior to reporting a child or patient in their care as missing and outline what Surrey Police will do, once these steps are complete. If a carer is reporting a missing child from a care home or living accommodation, they are asked to complete the Missing Child Philomena Protocol and, in some cases, this is migrant children.

9. Migrants and unaccompanied children

9.1 Unaccompanied migrant children are at potential risk of significant harm. In some cases, they are brought to the UK by deception, or coercion, and it is crucial to recognise the links between these events and organised crime groups, modern slavery, and child exploitation. The young person may appear to be in the country willingly, but they may believe they have no option but to comply.

9.2 Children are always considered vulnerable and therefore reports of unaccompanied children going missing should always be investigated. Treat anyone under the age of 18 years (or who claims to be 18 years and who hasn't been age assessed) as a child and child protection issues must take priority, regardless of the Police perception of the person's age. Please refer to [Operation Innerste guidance](#) for further information about steps to take when with an unaccompanied migrant child, particularly the taking of wet fingerprints and a photograph for identification purposes.

9.3 All children in supported accommodation or hotels should be assumed children under the age of 18 until they are 'Merton assessed' (the Local Authority carries out this age assessment). Whilst children are placed in hotels, they are under the care and responsibility of the Home Office and not the Local Authority. However, Children's Social Care must be notified as part of our police responsibility around missing children. If a child is reported as missing from a hotel or supported accommodation, a missing persons investigation must take priority.

9.4 What happens if the child turns 18 while they are still missing? Unless there are additional risk factors adult migrants who go missing should be treated as immigration absconders. However, when a missing migrant child turns 18 their status should not automatically be changed from missing to 'absconder' as each case should be considered on its own merits. Reaching the age of 18 does not affect a young person's vulnerability. Any decision to change the young person's status must be justified and agreed by the Detective Chief Inspector, when undertaking a long-term review of the investigation, prior to any final closure without a further review.

10. Adults at risk

10.1 A missing report can be a sign that ongoing domestic abuse is escalating, or a sign that the missing person may have left their partner to go to a safe place, particularly if there is a Location

of Interest (LOI) marker on the address, so this must be considered as part of the ongoing assessment of risk as well as inform any engagement plan. Even if police have no history of the abuse, outreach services may have additional information which can inform risk, and it is advisory to contact them, to establish whether they have concerns (particularly where the information does not reach a high threshold but may still inform police enquiries). This is recommended if the missing person shows signs of possible suicide or self-harm whilst missing, as this behaviour may be a sign of the missing person taking action to take their life, but this behaviour could be a sign of coercion or manipulation by either the person reporting or the person missing. Confidentiality may mean that the support agency may simply reply that they have no concerns about the absence and decline to share any information. Alternatively, if they believe the missing person may have been a victim of serious domestic abuse or control, they can say they have concerns, and the risk assessment can be raised to high and then details of any information held by the support agency can be obtained/ disclosed.

10.2 When considering hypotheses, there is value at looking at the circumstances objectively as well as any information about ongoing harm or crime, this is because a missing report can be a way for the caller to divert or mislead police enquiries. Previous missing reports from family members or partners has taught us that missing reporting behaviour can be a way to disguise who is a victim(s) and who is a perpetrator(s). This is not just in the context of domestic abuse, but it may also be associated with honour-based abuse, harmful traditional practices such as genital mutilation or forced marriage, even kidnap and murder (of children as well as adults). Therefore, a missing investigation is likely to be a one chance opportunity to not only uncover harm and crime, but also to gather forensic evidence at the scene, as well as video recording witness accounts. Refer to the Domestic abuse and Harmful traditional practices policy documents for further information.

10.3 A missing report may be a sign that the reporting person needs assistance with locating a family member or partner who is showing signs of dementia. Police have a duty to prevent serious harm (such as an injury due to a burn or a fall) or prevent death (including accidental death) which may occur due to poor health or partial ability. The Missing Adult Herbert Protocol is a way for family members or next of kin to inform police enquiries by completing a form and having an up to date photograph and/or a swab to assist police enquiries and this can be requested by police, should they be reported missing. Vulnerability like this can be a push/pull factor for a missing report and can be a symptom of a serious financial crime, such as money laundering or romance fraud. Alternatively, it can be a sign that the missing person is suffering abuse at the hands of those who provide care either in their home or at a care home, or a sign that the missing person was forced to agree to something under duress e.g. power of attorney. Missing circumstances like this may come to police attention in the form of a missing report and officers must remain professionally curious to identify these serious crimes and investigate. However, whilst vulnerability might be present, not all missing adults would meet the threshold of an Adult at Risk under [Section 42 Care Act 2014](#).

11. Patients

11.1 If a patient receiving care fails to return from authorised leave, or leaves the healthcare premises without telling anyone, or they have evaded the care of staff on site, and there is information to suggest that the patient is dangerous or particularly vulnerable, as defined by paragraph 28.15 in the [Mental Health Act Code of Practice 1983](#), then the police have a role to assist in the location and safe return of the patient. The patient will receive a proportionate and

timely police response and must be recorded as an 'AWOL' or 'Mental Health' incident and not a missing person. If a patient requires to be located and returned to a safe location, please follow the Right Care Right Person Policy and Procedure, this includes patients who have simply walked away from healthcare premises without telling anyone (Walkouts).

11.2 Right Care Right Person (RCRP) Policy does not apply to children (those under the age of 18 years). If a patient is a child and is reported as a missing person, a missing investigation must take priority.

12. Threat to life

12.1 Article 2 and 3 ECHR

A threat to someone's life may come in the form of a missing person report. The police have a duty under [Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#) to take reasonable steps to avoid a threat to someone's life, this is the threat of death or serious harm (this includes serious injury). Under Article 3, police have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect the public from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, irrespective of the victim's conduct (including terrorism). This could include causing great physical or mental pain, to persuade someone to do something, such as coercion and exploitation of children and adults.

12.2 Common law

Police have a duty to investigate a missing person if there is concern that the person has been, or is likely to be one of the following:

- a. a victim of a serious crime (such as murder, abduction, kidnap, rape, child sexual offence, false imprisonment, serious assault, human trafficking, forced marriage, modern slavery or criminal exploitation).
- b. there is concern that a person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, death, serious injury, torture, and/or cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment, and/or a prolonged period of pain or distress. For example, this may be due to the person:
 - intending 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 and support needs that render them incapable of independent living; and/or
 - being lost, ill, and/or having suffered an accident and needing urgent assistance.
- c. the person is a child under 16 and there is concern that the child has run away from home
- d. the person is a child under 18 and there is concern that the child will suffer significant harm whilst away
- e. there is concern that a person is dangerous and poses a real, immediate risk of death or serious harm to another person.

Please refer to the [National Police Chief's council guidance on a police duty to investigate missing persons](#), for further information.

12.3 Article 8 ECHR

There is a balance to be struck when considering someone's right to privacy. Often, these considerations will concern a person's right not to suffer harm, as covered by articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR. Where a person may have decided to leave a situation, [article 8](#) right to privacy may apply, which then may limit the actions that police can take to trace the individual. This right to privacy consideration may form the basis of a police risk assessment (where relevant), yet it is important not to assume that the person has chosen to go missing, without similarly considering reasonable alternatives. The rationale for taking, or not taking police action in such circumstances, must be recorded, by clearly outlining what information has led to the belief that

they may have chosen to do so. Children do not have the same rights as adults, and therefore these considerations are much less likely to be applied, furthermore the police will be working with parents and carers to search for and safeguard missing children.

13. Trigger Plans

13.1 When a person is reported missing 3 or more times (regardless of the location), they are a repeat missing person. Police complete and attach a Missing Trigger Plan to the Niche person record, along with a 'response / trigger plan' flag to tell you where to find it.

13.2 They are created and updated by the divisional Missing Person Unit (MPU, commonly known as the Locate team), who provide information about repeat missing persons, including risks they face whilst missing.

13.3 A duty inspector or the Neighbourhood Patrol Team (NPT) would read them before risk assessing or during an ongoing missing person search and investigation. It informs them about specific risk factors and can help decide about where to search first, who to call or visit as a priority, what to expect once you find them (it may include tips on how to communicate with them) and where it is safe to return them.

13.4 These plans may include information about multi agency safeguarding plans or whether a Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) is in place. It may provide bespoke advice on relevant powers and whether it's appropriate to use them in the context of what is occurring for that missing person (Police Protection, S136, etc.).

14. Digital investigation

14.1 Digital communications data may assist a missing person investigation, however a decision to pursue covert intelligence must be carefully considered as it breaches a person's right to a private life under Article 8 ECHR. Not all investigations that indicate a threat to life or serious harm, will require such intrusive steps to locate a person and all basic lines of enquiry ought to be completed first in the majority of cases (although there are exceptions like those listed below). Senior authorisation must be sought from the Gold Commander, who will consult the duty Special Point of Contact (SPOC) at RIPCOM to discuss the circumstances of the investigation. The urgent need to acquire communications data may be granted under [section 61a of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016](#), if the following criteria are met:

- a. There is an immediate threat of loss of life or serious harm, including children at immediate risk of being abused or otherwise harmed
- b. The acquisition of communications data will directly assist the prevention or detection of a serious crime, or where that operational opportunity will be lost
- c. There is an immediate threat to national security, or a unique time-critical opportunity to secure, or prevent the loss of information, which is of vital importance to national security, or that opportunity will be lost
- d. There has been a loss of life or serious harm to an individual, or where a person is otherwise unable to identify themselves, and the acquisition of communications data will assist with locating the next of kin, where there are no other methods to locate the next of kin.

14.2 If the above criteria are met, and the urgent acquisition of communications data is appropriate to the missing investigation, then authority will be granted by the Gold Commander. Once this happens the SPOC details will be shared with the investigation owner (typically a duty

inspector or DI) and following this exchange, the authorisation must be acted upon as soon as practicable.

15. Financial investigation

15.1 Whilst financial investigation is primarily used for asset recovery, financial lines of enquiry may assist in the locating of a missing person and/or provide an indication of a serious crime (if crime is suspected then this will require a [Production Order under the Proceeds of Crime Act \(POCA\) 2002](#) or under the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act \(PACE\) 1984](#)). Whilst conducting an initial search of someone's home address, officers should look for statements, paperwork or notes of any bank accounts (old or new), along with numbers of any credit or debit cards, and have a conversation with the reporting person about what bank they use as family members may have sent a transaction to them previously. Finally, seek consent to take copies (or a photo) of what is found, because this will assist in a thorough financial investigation, as not all accounts appear on a credit check.

15.2 Senior authorisation must be sought from the duty Inspector or Detective Inspector (or a more senior owner of the investigation), who decides whether seeking further covert financial information is appropriate. A Financial Investigator (FI) can be contacted via the divisional mailbox during office hours, or a financial credit check can be requested via 24/7 Intel. They will then consult and discuss the circumstances of the investigation with the senior officer, before a decision to assist is reached. The urgent need for financial information to assist in the search for a missing person, may be granted if the following criteria is met:

- a. There is an immediate threat of loss of life or serious harm
- b. There has been a loss of life or serious harm to the individual, and financial enquiries can assist in establishing whether the person is still alive (proof of life)

15.3 The FI will may ask for information about the investigation, so they can obtain proportionate information from financial services and institutions, this may include:

- a. The name of the senior officer who authorised the request
- b. Niche occurrence reference
- c. The name of the financial institution that information is being sought from (if known)
- d. Nature of the request, what are you looking for i.e. a credit check to see if there are new accounts, or has there been a transaction on an existing account
- e. Risk grading and the date / time the last risk assessment was made
- f. Whether or not the person's home address has been checked i.e. use of [section 17 PACE](#)
- g. Whether or not locations such as hospitals and a next of kin have been contacted
- h. Whether or not mobile phone / cell site data has been authorised or sought
- i. Whether or not the person has a vehicle and has ANPR been checked
- j. How will the financial information assist the missing person investigation, and what you hope to achieve from it.

15.4 Therefore, it is important that proportionate and relevant lines of enquiry have been completed first, to establish the person's whereabouts before considering financial investigation, as there are other basic steps that ought to be completed before undertaking more intrusive steps to locate a missing person.

16. Wanted persons

When a missing person is wanted due to their involvement in a criminal investigation, or an outstanding warrant is issued by a court, the duty Inspector will record their rationale for pursuing

the person as wanted and the missing person incident will be closed. However, reports which concern **children will not be dealt with as wanted** (anyone under the age of 18 years). If a child is reported as a missing person, a missing investigation must take priority, and a missing marker added to the Police National Computer (PNC). Duplication of the investigation and record keeping should be avoided. Each case should be led by the individual circumstances. For example, if the risk is high, and a person is also wanted for a minor criminal offence, then it would be appropriate to pursue a missing person report rather than a wanted person. This would be in the best interests of the individual as well as allowing for timely and proportionate enquiries to advance an investigation.

17. Long term missing investigations

The police have a duty to revisit cases where a missing person has not yet been found, these cases which can extend beyond 28 days, and can sometime extend to several years of investigation before an outcome. In certain cases, it is possible they will never be found due to the lifespan of the case. The police have a role to work with the next of kin, other public services such as social care, businesses and services in the wider community, and with members of the public to establish the person's whereabouts and/or gather further information or evidence to pursue lines of enquiry.

18. Found remains or body parts

18.1 Responding effectively when a body or human remains are found is important as the individual may be the subject of a missing person report. Early engagement with the coroner is required, and the principles of an effective murder investigation should be adhered to until the case has been established to be non-suspicious. The coroner will then take primary responsibility for establishing the identity of the individual, with the police assisting enquiries. Treat cases where a body or remains of a person are found as suspicious until enquiries determine otherwise, and a Sudden Death investigation can be carried out.

18.2 Notify UK Missing Persons Unit (UKMPU) within 48 hours of an unidentified body or body parts being found, so that other forces can check their records of missing people. The UKMPU is available to provide specialist support when an unidentified person or remains have been found. The UKMPU acts as the central repository for these cases and maintains a national database, to facilitate matching of unidentified cases with outstanding Missing Persons reports. See UKMPU unidentified remains for further guidance.

18.3 Circulate the details of the deceased person on PNC when the body is identified to enable police forces to relate any subsequent missing person report back to the deceased and inform the reporting person.

19. Task or transfer of an investigation to another force area and international missing persons

19.1 Difficulties can arise when a person reported missing resides outside the area where the report is being made, for example, a student in temporary accommodation or a day trip visitor. When deciding where ownership of the investigation lies, the principal issue is to consider where most of the enquiries will be from that point forward and who has the greatest opportunity of locating the missing person. It is probable that the place where the person was last seen would generate most initial enquiries, although this is not a fixed rule. The police area that receives the report must record it, this is typically the call handler who will run through the missing question set and record the answers using SmartSTORM (at an early stage the record will only be a CAD

and no additional paperwork is required), the caller must not be told to report to another force, instead police must do this on their behalf and **callers will not be turned away without having received any assistance**. The call handler will then notify and handover the information to the relevant force contact centre to make a decision and follow up.

19.2 It may be more suitable that the receiving force retains ownership of the investigation and requests a task to be completed by another force, i.e. an address or location check. In the event, that police wish to transfer an entire investigation and have already undertaken initial enquiries beforehand, then the Task or Transfer procedure must be followed and a form completed with the rationale and enquiries recorded within. Written acknowledgement from the receiving force should be sought and attached to the record and it is only then that the associated ongoing risk is transferred. The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) have agreed a national task or transfer form and guidance on ownership of cases, to assist forces in avoiding the ambiguity around who holds the associated risk, until such time that a missing person is located. Therefore, it is prudent for requesting forces to remain vigilant until such time that another force grants the task or transfer request in writing, i.e. an email with the relevant form attached.

19.3 When investigating an international missing person, the UKMPU at the National Crime Agency (NCA) can be contacted to assist forces in locating the relevant border force and raise a notification via a Liaison Officer at the UK International Crime Bureau (UKICB, also known as Interpol).

20. Lost contact

The police may receive calls from friends or family of a loved one who they may wish to regain contact with. However, this is **not a missing person** and the caller must be directed to alternative services in the first instance, such as the charity Missing People lost contact service who can provide them with advice and assistance. APP states "There will be circumstances when a person's whereabouts is not known but police involvement may not be required, for example, where a family has split up following a relationship breakdown and contact has been lost with a family member. Policing should focus on reducing harm or the risk of harm – the police are not to be used solely to trace people. Appropriate action might include a referral to other services that can provide advice or assistance. The police service is not a tracing agency and there are specialist organisations that are better placed to assist an individual who wishes to locate a lost relative."

21. Prevention Interviews

21.1 Surrey Police will carry out a Prevention Interview as part of all found reports. Officers attending should ensure that their Body Worn Video is switched on. The officer will have a face-to-face conversation to confirm the person's wellbeing, spot signs of coercion, abuse or exploitation, or identify crime(s) that have occurred, and gather and record intelligence. Be mindful that the language used and how we present ourselves can have a significant impact on a person's ability to disclose abuse, avoid using victim blaming language, and do not minimise abuse or excuse the perpetrators behaviour. Officers will document their observations of the victim's demeanour, in particular any behaviour which may suggest they are unable to provide information through fear. Any disclosure of a notifiable offence made by the found person must be recorded as a crime at the earliest opportunity, and in all cases within 24 hours, in accordance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). The officer should use this opportunity to signpost the person to community services or public information if relevant, which can prevent or reduce the likelihood of a missing incident occurring again. All information gathered will be added to a Signs form which is

required for all missing children (under 18) and vulnerable missing adults. For missing and found children, a copy of the Signs form is shared with the child's school for information and safeguarding purposes much like a domestic abuse incident (Op Encompass).

21.2 APP states "The purpose of the prevention interview is to identify any ongoing risk or factors which may contribute to the person going missing again. The interview provides a valuable opportunity to find out useful information that may indicate harm suffered by the returning person. It can also identify details that may help trace the person in the event of a future missing episode. The interviewer should check for any indications that the person has suffered harm, where and with whom they have been, and give them an opportunity to disclose any offending against or by them."

RESPONSIBILITIES

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of those who record and respond to missing person reports, and what steps they must take to fulfil their part in the investigation process. The flowchart sets out the missing person process:

Missing Person Process Flowchart v2.pdf

22. Contact (Force Command Centre (FCC))

22.1 The call handler is the first point of contact when receiving a call to report a person missing. They are responsible for the following:

- a. Create a CAD in SmartSTORM for recording purposes.
- b. Complete the missing question set (TQ&A) and gather as much information from the caller as possible.
- c. Grade the CAD and complete a THRIVE assessment, (copy/paste it into the CAD).
- d. Create a Missing Person Niche occurrence type. Please refer to Guide for Contact - Storm to Niche
- e. Once all the above is complete, pass it to Dispatch for PNC/Niche checks.
- f. If a child or adult that is assessed as missing person on the CAD, a Missing Person Niche occurrence must be created with a Signs completed, even if that person returns in a short period of time.
- g. If a child is reported missing to Surrey but is living in another area, a Child Protection Niche occurrence must be created with a Signs completed, to notify partners that a child has come to notice (but another force area are dealing).
- h. A CAD must not be closed without first checking that the investigation is running either on the Niche missing person dashboard or a Signs document has been completed.
- i. Not missing relates to circumstances which include being in a custody suite, admitted to hospital, lost contact with family members (see section 20), or circumstances which would come under the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) Policy
- j. Reasonable steps are expected of other professionals (including carers and staff), to make sufficient efforts to check on the safe whereabouts of a child. The Missing Child Philomena Protocol is a process whereby the professional is expected to have completed the forms and made sufficient efforts described in the form to try and return them back home safely, much like any parent. This form is asked to be shared with police should they require police assistance beyond this point. However, if the caller has yet to undertake any checks or cannot satisfy the questions asked, then the call handler has the autonomy to advise the caller to make efforts of their own and call back should they still not find them. The CAD can then be closed. This effectively reminds other professionals of their duty and capacity to

safeguard children. The CAD will be retained for information, but a Niche occurrence is not required unless they call back with further information and/or concern for a child.

- k. If a call relates to an vulnerable adult with signs of Dementia, information about the person's welfare may be referred to by the caller as the Missing Adult Herbert Protocol. The call handler will provide advice and ask the caller if they can have the form ready for when the attending officer reaches the scene (where relevant).
- l. If the information relates to a person who is missing from a location outside of Surrey, then a missing TQ&A will be completed however, the call handler must redirect the information to the relevant force as soon as possible (but for children, also create a Child Protection Niche occurrence). This will typically be via another force contact centre or a liaison officer at the UK International Crime Bureau (UKICB - Interpol), if the person is believed to be missing internationally. Please refer to section 19.1 about transferring CADs to other forces.

23. Dispatch (Force Command Centre (FCC))

23.1 The Dispatch operator is responsible for the following:

- a. Gather information known to police about the missing person from police recording systems including Niche, PNC, PND and cut/paste relevant information into the CAD to assist with decision making.
- b. If a missing child has a risk flag, such as 'Exploitation' or 'Vulnerable' this means there is a Risk Management Plan in place and possibly a Missing Trigger Plan attached to the record (if they have been missing before). These plans must be highlighted to the Dispatch Inspector and the duty Inspector, so specific instructions specified within may be followed and form part of risk and deployment decision making.
- c. Ensure that a missing PNC marker is added to the person's record (once a duty Inspector has decided it will be investigated as a missing person and has completed an initial risk assessment).

23.2 **The Dispatch Inspector is responsible for the following:**

- a. Ensure the duty Inspector is made aware of the missing incident as soon as possible. When there is a need to respond immediately to search for a missing person, the decision to deploy resources will be made jointly between the Force Incident Manager (FIM) and a duty Inspector. **However, this Policy does not prevent Contact and Dispatch from deciding to action immediate deployment** (without or without a decision from a duty Inspector), following a THRIVE assessment (particularly for Grade 1 calls).
- b. Advise the duty Inspector (if relevant and proportionate) to promptly seek advice from experts (i.e. a CLEM or a PoISA) and assist the duty Inspector with on duty call outs and decision making, to facilitate an immediate police response and inform golden hour investigation strategy.
- c. If a missing report is identified as a 'Critical Incident', then a Force Silver must be appointed, who will set direction for the investigation thereafter.
- d. Where a report is suspected to be a crime in action, the incident should be restricted, and the on-call Kidnap and Extortion (K&E) SIO must be contacted immediately. The K&E SIO will review the circumstances and determine the appropriate response to the incident and provide direction of the immediate actions required. An entry will be required on the incident so that it is clear who is responsible for leading the investigation.
- e. Deploy operational command resources as required.
- f. Assist the duty Inspector by ensuring the missing investigation is being managed and recorded effectively using an occurrence, prior to closing the CAD (normally once an attending officer is at the last seen location).

24. Force Silver

24.1 The Force Silver is responsible for the following:

- a. Escalate every high risk missing person to the Force Management Meeting (FMM) and the Silver Grip Meeting, providing a brief overview of the circumstances, current risk assessment and risk grading (by using the Niche dashboard to track all live investigations) and designate (and record on the occurrence OEL) whether a duty Inspector or Detective Inspector (DI) will take primary ownership, until the person is located or until the person becomes a long term missing investigation.
- b. Oversee and advise in all high-risk missing person investigations (these may also be critical incidents) and arrange a priority meeting with the designated ownership officer (DO or a DI), to set direction for enquiries and negotiate and allocate resources, to provide an investigation mindset from an early stage.
- c. For cases other than high risk, the Force Silver will oversee any that are owned by the duty inspector. However, if ownership is held by DI, MCT, etc. then they must be overseen by that dept DCI.
- d. If an exploited child is subject (victim, witness or suspect) of two or more active criminal investigations and there are concerns for the child's ongoing welfare, including being a victim of serious harm, death (including threats to kill), or there are signs of likely suicide, then the Force Silver will oversee any that are owned by the duty inspector. However, if ownership is held by a DI, MCT, etc. then they must be overseen by that department DCI. This is to avoid missed opportunities to gather evidence, rather than focus on a particular incident and the child's involvement and behaviour at that moment in time. Expert consideration must be given to the broader concern for the child in a serious and complex situation (Op Swordfish).
- e. Review all risk missing beyond 24 hours.
- f. Advise and resolve reports of escalation which may delay investigations and resolve task or transfer requests which have been refused or left idle by other forces.
- g. Liaise and provide further advice to Dispatch about the deployment of operational command resources and advise or liaise with the PoLSA about the potential use of specialist or multi agency assets which may be utilised.
- h. Escalate and brief the Force Gold on all high-risk missing person investigations or raise to the SIO (if appropriate) without delay.

25. Force Gold

25.1 The Force Gold is responsible for the following:

- a. Oversee all high-risk missing person investigations, particularly those which indicate serious or complex crime (and signs of exploitation), and task specialist crime units to review the investigation and decide on a proportionate response. These kinds of missing person investigations almost always require immediate police resources, and a strategic investigation mindset must be applied.
- b. Review all risk beyond 72 hours.
- c. Escalate and brief the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) on serious or complex criminal investigations, particularly a crime in action which requires the immediate review and ownership of an SIO.
- d. Each High-Risk Missing Person will be raised at the daily Force Management Meeting and oversight agreed by the FMM chair.

26. Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)

26.1 The SIO (a PIP3 senior detective) is responsible for the following:

- a. Lead a missing person investigation when it is suspected to be a serious crime in action such as a kidnap or false imprisonment, the on-call Kidnap and Extortion SIO must be contacted without delay and determine the appropriate response to the incident. The K&E SIO is responsible for ensuring that the incident is updated with any direction and whether or not they are taking responsibility for the investigation.
- b. Where a missing person is suspected to have been the victim of a serious crime (i.e. murder). This should be referred to the on-call Major Crime SIO without delay.
- c. Lead and review (with the DCI) long-term missing (LTM) investigations which are serious or complex criminal investigations, periodically when required.

27. Duty Inspector

27.1 The role of a duty Inspector is vital throughout a missing person investigation and after the person is found. They are responsible for the following:

- a. Decide whether the incident will be investigated as a missing person and update the CAD and Niche occurrence type to reflect the decision. If a child does not meet the definition, then the occurrence must be changed to Child Protection and a Signs must be completed and shared with the PSPA. In any case, for children a Signs must be completed.
- b. Complete a risk assessment and consider whether the circumstances involve serious harm and/or are a crime in action, (ideally using the Niche risk assessment template). Answers recorded by the call handler will assist in this assessment.
- c. A missing person will be categorised as either low, medium or high (as outlined in the table below). **Surrey Police do NOT use the Very low risk or 'No apparent risk' category as described in APP.**
- d. Risk of serious harm has been defined as (Home Office, 2002; OASys, 2006) "A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible".

Risk of harm		
Low	Medium	High
Possible but minimal	Likely but not serious	Serious harm is very likely

- e. Prioritise the investigation and set golden hour tasks if there is an apparent immediate threat to life or limb, and/or the circumstances are considered out of character for the missing person. Previous missing incidents and trigger plans will inform the current risk assessment, including locations where the person was found before and if they were seriously harmed.
- f. Proportionate lines of enquiry should be set to gather the required information to inform the next risk assessment. The Force Silver must be involved in the examination and direction of initial lines of enquiry for high-risk investigations and those involving children.
- g. The assessment of risk will remain a dynamic and on-going process, and the police response must be capable of escalation (or de-escalation) as information changes. Certain action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness.

- h. Ensure the Force Silver is briefed on all high risk investigations, in readiness for the Force Management Meeting (FMM) and the Silver Grip Meeting, who will provide ownership and investigation advice thereafter, where relevant.
- i. Refer the investigation to a Detective Inspector (DI) to review and identify serious crime. A high-risk missing person must have a DI review as soon as practicable, for all other levels of risk, a review within 12 hours of receiving the report.
- j. Consider and record relevant hypotheses and plan and record a search and investigation plan on Niche. This can be done once an attending officer (NPT constable) has first visited the last seen location.
- k. If an investigation requires the assistance of another force or is sent to another force to request a transfer, then the duty inspector must ensure sufficient rationale is recorded in the request form. If delays occur and/or refusal is made, then the advice can be sought from a Force Silver to resolve it. A pending transfer request must not prevent immediate or necessary police action from being taken to advance the investigation and/or further inform risk.
- l. Review the risk assessment periodically (at least once each shift/handover) to ensure the investigation is progressed in a timely and efficient way and where relevant, complete a new risk assessment template. e.g., when new information is received which may alter the risk or advance (if not redirect) enquiries.
- m. Utilise the missing person dashboard in Niche, to track outstanding occurrences and allow for the effective management of each missing person investigation. In addition, relevant CADs in SmartSTORM will need to be tracked, which have yet to be recorded in Niche but will still require a decision/alternative instruction on deployment (or not).
- n. Consider and seek advice regarding a media appeal and/or a media engagement strategy via the Corporate Communications Department, if required.

28. Detective Inspector (DI)

28.1 When a missing person investigation requires a detective review, a DI is responsible for the following:

- a. Review missing person investigations, particularly high-risk missing person investigations (especially those involving exploited children) and where the missing person is believed to be subject to serious harm or a possible crime in action.
- b. A high-risk missing person must have a DI review as soon as practicable, for all other levels of risk, a review within 12 hours of receiving the report
- c. The purpose of the review is not to peer review the duty Inspectors actions, but to identify any hidden crimes and advise on specialist crime investigative tools that may support the investigation.
- d. Review the ongoing risk assessment and where relevant, complete a new risk assessment.
- e. Review and consider further hypotheses, if serious harm is identified.
- f. Lead a missing person investigation, where relevant e.g. when a specialist crime investigation team is required to take ownership and pursue perpetrators of serious and complex crime.
- g. Review long-term missing person investigations, when required. A missing person investigation becomes long-term when it becomes 'inactive' whereby the occurrence is added to the long-term missing workload in Niche. The long-term missing investigation will be subject to a periodic review at 28 days, then three months, then six months, then at least once a year thereafter until the missing person is found/has returned. Each review will be completed and recorded by a DI in Niche and a next review date will be set by the DI, at the end of each review.

- h. A long-term missing investigation requiring closure with no further review, e.g., filed indefinitely, must be authorised by a Detective Chief Inspector (DCI), before it is removed from the long-term missing workload in Niche.

29. Detective Chief Inspector (DCI)

29.1 The DCI is responsible for the following:

- a. Oversee missing investigations which are owned by a DI. These will be cases which are led by a specialist crime department, e.g. CID, MCT, etc. and involve serious or complex crime.
- b. File long-term missing person investigations (without a further review), unless there has been SIO involvement (if so, consult with SIO for a final decision). Unless there are additional risk factors adult migrants who go missing should be treated as immigration absconders. However, when a missing migrant child turns 18 their status should not automatically be changed from missing to 'absconder' as each case should be considered on its own merits. Reaching the age of 18 does not affect a young person's vulnerability. Any decision to change the young person's status must be justified and agreed by the Detective Chief Inspector, when undertaking a long-term review of the investigation, prior to any final closure without a further review.

30. Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)

30.1 The NPT constable (attending officer) is responsible for the following:

- a. Complete a missing Pronto report and establish what has occurred, identify the reporting person's concerns and spot signs of harm/crime at the last seen location. The officer will trace whether the person has prepared to leave by searching for items the person may (or may not) have taken with them e.g., a bottle of water, appropriate clothing, mobile phone charger, passport, or keys to a vehicle. It may be apparent that the missing person has fled the location with no intention to return or the person is likely to come back or it could raise further concern as to their ongoing welfare. This search and report will inform a further risk assessment and lines of enquiry.
- b. Consider police powers whilst at the last seen location and/or gain voluntary consent from the reporting person, next of kin or appropriate adult when required, to advance a police investigation.
- c. Complete tasks as directed, then record all outcomes (positive or negative) in Niche in a timely way. Inform the NPT sergeant of anything which may alter the risk or advance (if not redirect) enquiries or any information which may indicate a crime has occurred, including any evidence which may need to be secured.
- d. Complete a found Pronto report, following a face-to-face Police Prevention Interview_ once the person is found and/or has returned (if not, as soon as practicable).
- e. Complete a Signs form (formerly known as SCARF) and attach it to the occurrence and allocate to the Police Single Point of Contact (PSPA) workload in Niche.
- f. Add a Located marker in PNC and close the Misper Pronto Alert (if used).
- g. Close remaining tasks in Niche once the missing person is found/has returned and a police investigation has concluded.
- h. Coordinate with local safeguarding teams including, the Missing Person Units (MPU) divisional Child Exploitation Team (CET) or a Youth Engagement Officer (YEO) to ensure relevant intelligence is shared. If a Prevention Interview has indicated a missing child is experiencing exploitation or is at significant risk of being vulnerable to it, then the officer will

notify CET officers (in person/via Niche) to allow for further intervention, gather intelligence and police investigation.

30.2 The NPT Sergeant (supervisor) is responsible for the following:

- a. Coordinate the allocation of tasks as directed, particularly track those which are medium and low risk and liaise with the duty Inspector, regarding the outcome and inform them of anything which may alter the risk or advance (if not redirect) enquiries.
- b. Ensure that all task and investigation outcomes (positive or negative) have been recorded by the NPT constable in Niche.
- c. Ensure both missing and found Pronto reports (if not a transfer to another force form) is added to the occurrence.
- d. Ensure a Signs form (formerly known as SCARF) form is completed by the NPT constable and is allocated to the PSPA workload in Niche.
- e. Complete the finalisation template in Niche and carry out final steps stated within, prior to closure.

31. Missing Person Units (MPU)

31.1 Officers and staff in MPU are responsible for the following:

- a. Act as a point of contact for any officers and staff regarding the investigation of all missing persons.
- b. Pursue lines of enquiry as required and/or as directed by supervision or owners of missing person investigations.
- c. Create, develop and maintain effective working relationships with other teams and partner agencies; to assist in risk assessment(s), overall decision making and ensure each investigation is managed in a timely way.
- d. Create and record Missing Person Trigger Plans when required. APP states "Where it is assessed that the individual is at risk of going missing again, the police should ensure that information gathered is recorded to assist in creating a plan outlining key actions to be taken if the person is subsequently reported missing. This 'trigger plan' may then be used to locate them as quickly as possible and ensure relevant partners are informed of the incident. Trigger plans should be reviewed following the conclusion of any subsequent missing incidents and include details of any crimes or grooming behaviour and should be shared with other police forces if the individual moves to another area." Surrey children's services create Safer plans which may be shared with police and these can be used to inform police trigger plans if the child is reported as missing repeatedly.
- e. Consider and arrange to issue a Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN), if required if a person is likely suspected to abduct or prevent a missing child from returning to safety. Track information indicating that a person is in breach of a CAWN and take relevant steps to address the breach.
- f. Advise the duty Inspector and relevant divisional officers about repeat missing persons who are very likely to be faced with serious harm whilst missing and direct them to Missing Trigger plans or Risk Management plans recorded in Niche, if required.
- g. Monitor, resolve and escalate issues where children in cares homes or accommodation of any kind, are being reported routinely or inappropriately.
- h. The MPU coordinators check over all missing records, prior to finalisation, and check if repeat missing children or repeat vulnerable adults require additional services and ensure a Signs form has been completed and shared with the PSPA. If significant concern is identified (children), or possible care or support is needed (adults), even if it's after just one missing episode, then intervention or support may be required. These multi agency

approaches aim to safeguard the person, identify and investigate crime, and provide additional support to the person and/or family members which is not otherwise available such as health or educational support.

32. Child Exploitation Teams (CET)

32.1 Officers and staff in CET are responsible for the following:

- a. Act as a point of contact for any officers and staff regarding the investigation of exploited children, which may include children that are still missing or have been missing previously.
- b. Create, develop and maintain effective working relationships with other teams and partner agencies; to assist in risk assessment(s), overall decision making and ensure each investigation is managed in a timely way.
- c. Create and record Risk Management Plans when required. This is for the purposes of recording further proactive investigation, i.e. work to gather further info on crimes, suspects, and build an investigation where there is an indication of exploitation or grooming.
- d. Attend the Risk Vulnerability Meetings (RVM - previously known as RMM) to discuss and risk assess (for each child) the extra familial harm that can be associated with missing and exploited children using the RAG rating.
- e. If an exploited child is subject (victim, witness or suspect) of two or more active criminal investigations and there are concerns for the child's ongoing welfare, including being a victim of serious harm, death (including threats to kill), or there are signs of likely suicide, then the CET sergeant must act and liaise with the Officer in Charge (OIC) of any ongoing criminal investigation, to assess the overall risk to the child. This is to avoid missed opportunities to gather evidence, rather than focus on a particular incident and the child's involvement and behaviour at that moment in time. Expert consideration must be given to the broader concern for the child in a serious and complex situation (Op Swordfish).
- f. The CET coordinators will liaise with the MPU coordinators, to ensure a Sign form is completed and shared with the PSPA for all cases involving an exploited child. They will also escalate repeat missing child cases with the CET sergeant and arrange for an assessment, if signs of exploitation are identified. The coordinator will continue to liaise with the MPUs to update and track information recorded in relevant Missing Trigger Plans to assist in the search for exploited children.

33. Youth Engagement Officers (YEO)

33.1 Officers and staff in Youth Engagement are responsible for the following:

- a. If appointed, following an assessment at RVM, provide intervention to disrupt emerging concerns of exploitation or grooming.
- b. Liaise with MPU and CET and update them on intervention or engagement, to assist with risk management and the search for repeat missing children.

34. Police Single Point of Contact (PSPA)

34.1 Officers and staff in PSPA re responsible for the following:

- a. Ensure that a Signs form is shared with relevant partner agencies, following a missing investigation, and where there is none, prompt the divisional Neighbourhood Patrol Team (NPT) to complete a Signs form as a priority.
- b. Surrey Children's Services will offer a child a Return Home Interview (RHI) to all children in Surrey who have been missing, to try and uncover information to prevent the risk recurring

and reduce exposure to risk while missing. Relevant information from the RHI will be shared with the police and the home as appropriate and should be used to update any safeguarding/trigger plans. When a child repeatedly goes missing (3 times in 30 days) or is missing for over 24 hours this might lead to a s47 strategy meeting if the risk of harm is met. However, children's services might decide that a missing intervention meeting would be more productive in establishing patterns of missing, push/pull factors, risk of exploitation and planning. Sometimes the frequency and pattern of missing means that partners decide on regular intervention meetings to help with information sharing and safety planning. In either case, if the episode was over 24 hours or 3 in 30 days, there should be either a strategy meeting or an intervention meeting with multi agency representation.

35. Intelligence Units (including Business Intelligence)

35.1 Officers and staff in Intelligence Units are responsible for the following:

- a. Process partnership intelligence forms and intelligence which is shared following a local authority Independent Return Home Interview (RHI).
- b. Ensure the safe retention of personal information and provide data analysis for the force when required. Analysis includes missing data which is made available to officers and staff via the Performance Portal or via the Niche Portal (dashboards, query searches, etc.).
- c. Assist with annual data returns, including missing person data shared with the National Crime Agency (NCA) for online publication.