Missing Person Investigation

Standard Operating Procedure

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1. Purpose

1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) provides front line operational officers, tactical supervisors and strategic managers with guidance, direction and structures around the management of all missing person investigations. The SOP covers all missing, wanted and found persons including abscondees and escapees and aims to provide an appropriate graded response with ongoing ownership, roles and responsibilities.

1.2 The Police Service of Scotland (PSoS) will treat every missing person investigation proportionately with appropriate levels of priority and resources, through ongoing assessment of risk posed by the missing person to themselves or to other members of the general public.

1.3 People go missing for a variety of reasons. While most are resolved relatively quickly other disappearances continue for prolonged periods causing significant impact on the lives of those they leave behind. PSoS will utilise this ongoing assessment of risk with partners, whilst involved in attempting to prevent, trace and/or assisting to trace persons who have been reported missing, under the terms of the missing person definition.

1.4 Missing person investigations should be regarded as a high-risk area of policing and given appropriate levels of priority and resources as going missing should be regarded as an indicator of other issues. PSoS continually reviews its National Missing Person Strategy along with partners to ensure that good practice is identified by the National Missing Person Strategic Group and promulgated via the National Missing Person Tactical Group and coordinated by a National Missing Person Coordinator through a network of Divisional and Departmental Missing Person Coordinators.

1.5 From the outset each missing person incident will be treated as an investigation, given criminality can be later uncovered and ultimately result in a homicide investigation. Many also result in a fatal outcome through suicide and many more are likely to be subjected to child sexual exploitation, human trafficking or other high risk concerns. With this in mind every effort should be made to professionally develop the intelligence picture around the missing persons lifestyle and accurate records of the investigation should be established and maintained in all cases.

1.6 The Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) places a positive obligation on the police to take reasonable action, within their powers, to safeguard the rights of individuals who may be at risk including those regarded as missing persons. Whether a missing person has been identified as being high, medium or low risk, all investigations will be carried out with fairness and integrity with positive recorded action at every stage and the missing person will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Definition

2.1 For the purposes of missing person investigation management, Police Scotland use two categories including Concern for Person and Missing Person.

2.2 A **Concern for Person** is defined as a person, whose whereabouts are **known or believed known** and there are concerns of risk of harm to the individual.

2.3 The incident recorded on Command and Control will be classified as a Concern for Person until their safety/wellbeing or otherwise is established. Where investigating officers fail to locate the person at the place where they were believed to be they shall be deemed to be a Missing Person.

2.4 A **Missing Person** is defined as anyone whose whereabouts is unknown and:
   1. where the circumstances are out of character; or
   2. the context suggests the person may be subject to crime; or
   3. the person is at risk of harm to themselves or another.

2.5 A common sense approach must be taken when assessing the risk and vulnerability associated with missing persons. The foregoing criteria may not be obviously apparent but will always include looked after and accommodated children, who have been reported to the police whose whereabouts are unknown. There may also be circumstances where a person is missing but the police involvement may not be required, such as tracing a lost relative. In all investigations they will be considered missing until located and their well being or otherwise is established.

2.6 For the purposes of the Missing Person Investigation Standard Operating Procedure, a child is defined as per section 93(2) (b) Children (Scotland) Act 1995:
   - a child who has not attained the age of 16 years;
   - a child over the age of 16 years, who has not attained the age of 18 years and in respect of whom a supervision requirement is in force; or
   - a child whose case has been referred to a children’s hearing by virtue of a supervision order issued in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
   - and for the purposes of the application of Chapters 2 and 3 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to a person who has failed to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse, includes a person who is over 16 years of age but is not over school age.


3.1 The initial report of a missing person will generally be made through:
   - A telephone call to the area control room or
   - The reporter attending at a police station in person.
3.2 The way we deal with missing person investigation is very important and getting it right from the outset ensures the appropriate response is provided.

3.3 For the purposes of this SOP, all references to the Missing Person Investigation Form include references to local recording mechanisms; officers should refer to geographical appendices for local variations in recording.

3.4 For local procedures relating to initial reporting of Missing Persons refer to appendices ‘A’ – ‘H’.

3.5 ‘V’ Division have commenced a pilot on behalf of Police Scotland and now record all missing person reports on a Missing Person Investigation Form. This form is a Microsoft Excel document only accessed through a desktop computer located within ‘V’ Division. For further guidance, see Appendix ‘B’.

3.6 It must be remembered that this could be the first indicator that a serious crime has occurred such as Murder or Abduction. A Murder investigation often begins as a missing person investigation. Missing episodes can also be an indicator of other crime related issues such as child sexual exploitation, human trafficking or other high risk concerns. A list of relevant SOPs is provided at Appendix ‘J’.

3.7 It is also important to consider all issues that arise from dealing with a missing person who belongs to a minority ethnic group, has particular religious beliefs, issues relating to gender or sexuality, a disability or anything that may require a sensitive approach or consideration.

3.8 For further information in relation to diversity refer to Diversity Booklet: A Practical Guide - Police Scotland or through local consultation with Diversity staff or contacts.

3.9 Consideration should also be given to the possibility that community concern may run high, particularly where the missing person is a child and media interest can be intense.

3.10 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

3.11 Officers should bear in mind the unique risks associated with the investigation of Missing persons where HBV, Forced Marriage or Female Genital Mutilation is suspected. These risks must be considered prior to disclosure of any information on whereabouts to any individual, particularly to family members, and officers should seek advice and guidance from supervisors and specialist staff where necessary.

3.12 For further guidance refer to Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation SOP.

4. Initial Roles and Responsibilities
4.1 Public Counter – Police or Police Staff

4.1.1 Staff working within police office public bars should ensure they have received the appropriate training before commencing the report. Staff taking the report should ensure members of the public are given the opportunity to make a missing person report in private, away from other members of the public, if they so desire and should commence the interview without undue delay. It is imperative that, as well as satisfying the data requirements of the Missing Person report, staff ask probing questions to allow an assessment of the risk and an appropriate police response to be actioned. Police Staff obtaining initial details should make the on-duty supervisor aware of the report immediately, so that the investigation can commence and the initial assessment of risk can be discussed and agreed.

4.2 Service Centre and Area Control Room

4.2.1 All staff working within Service Centres (SC) and Area Control Rooms (ACR) have a key role in correctly determining when a member of the public is reporting someone as missing.

4.2.2 Staff must have a thorough understanding of the definition of a ‘Concern for Person’ and a ‘Missing Person’ (see Section 2).

4.2.3 All staff should be alert to the fact that Missing Person incidents may present initially as “Concern For” calls or calls such as “dropped 999” calls (where enquiries can be made).

4.2.4 Should initial enquiries fail to trace the person and establish their wellbeing, the incident type should be changed to a Missing Person incident and a divisional supervisor alerted.

4.2.5 ACR staff and Divisional officers who initially respond to such calls have a key role to play in identifying risks at an early stage and alerting their supervisors, to ensure a proportionate response is co-ordinated.

4.2.6 All missing person reports, regardless of whether they are reported missing from home, hospital or care establishment will be managed in accordance with the following Standard Operating Procedures:

- Command and Control PSoS SOP
- Incident Prioritisation and Response PSoS SOP
- Critical Incident Management PSoS SOP
- Contact Management PSoS SOP (Section 8)

4.2.7 There will be occasions where a caller contacts Police, in attempt to trace an individual, but clearly states that they do not have immediate concerns for that person’s well being, (e.g. attempt to trace long lost friend, or enquiry to ascertain if a family member is within Police Custody).
4.2.7 In such circumstance, an operational police response will not generally be required, and appropriate advice should be provided. However, where there is any doubt upon initial receipt of a call, as to whether or not it should be considered as the report of a Missing Person, advice must be sought from a supervisor.

4.3 Service Centre Call Taker Responsibilities

4.3.1 On receipt of a missing person report staff in the ACR will:

- Create a call handling system record;
- Ask questions to establish the appropriate call grading, taking cognisance of the immediacy of the risk posed to the missing person, their vulnerability and the danger they may pose to themselves or others;
- Create a ‘Missing person’ Command and Control Incident (STORM or equivalent). The description field on the log should read: LAST NAME / FIRST NAME / DATE OF BIRTH.
- Ensure all relevant details, including circumstances of disappearance, are added to the incident.

4.3.2 The following questions should be considered:

- Confirm the reporter’s name, address, telephone number and location. Are they next of kin? If not, who is?
- What was the person’s emotional state when they were last seen (e.g. has there been an incident leading to them going missing/ have they self harmed or had suicidal tendencies previously)?
- Has the person gone missing before, if yes, where were they found?
- Are they considered vulnerable or with specific risks and what are they?
- Are there any additional concerns that the police should be aware of (e.g. drugs / alcohol issues / special needs / medication requirements / risk to others)?
- Obtain accurate personal details of the missing person, Name, DOB, Address and telephone number. Include a physical description, clothing worn and mobile telephone number if available?
- Where is the person missing from? When and where were they last seen?
- Do they have use of a vehicle, if yes, make, model, colour and registration number of vehicle?
- Access to money, bank accounts, passports?

4.3.3 If the person is missing from Hospital, the following should be asked:

- When did the person leave and was there a reason given or known?
- Have the hospital grounds been searched by staff?
- Are they considered vulnerable or at risk? (What is the hospital’s risk assessment and why)?
• Have they absconded previously?
• If they are a detained person, on what grounds?
• Are there any drugs / alcohol issues?
• Do they have any special needs Physical / Mental / Medical?
• Does the hospital have CCTV

4.4 ACR Controller Responsibilities

4.4.1 Upon taking control of the incident the controller will:

• Task officers to attend in line with the Command and Control SOP;
• Notify Divisional Inspector at the earliest opportunity and reflect this notification on the incident log. Where it is apparent to the ACR from the initial circumstances reported that the Missing Person is of High Risk, the divisional Inspector will be informed immediately, to ensure the time critical assessment and active management of what may become a Critical Incident.
• Ensure details of the missing person are circulated on appropriate talk groups, including the one that covers the area of the missing person’s home address and / or where the missing person was last seen.

4.5 ACR Actions - Traced or Returning Missing persons

4.5.1 Where details of a missing person have been entered on PNC, the Control Room Sergeant/Supervisor, or a person nominated by him or her, must ensure that PNC is updated.

5. Initial Attending Officer

5.1 Where the initial report of the missing person has been reported through the Area Control Room (ACR) or by someone attending at the police station an Initial Attending Officer will be despatched to carry out investigation.

5.2 The key role of the Initial Attending Officer responding to the report of a missing person is to:
• investigate;
• search; and
• risk assess.

5.3 Consideration must be given to the nature of the report being taken and where appropriate, the needs of individuals or the relevance of their vulnerability. This could be on account of disability, age, religion or belief, culture, race / ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender, pregnancy and marital / civil partnership as this may affect the nature of the investigation. Specific needs may include the use of interpreters including British Sign Language or other communication support. Religious or cultural sensitivities may include timings of interviews and gender issues.
5.4 The Initial Attending Officer must understand they are conducting an investigation, not just taking a report. This will enable an assessment of the circumstances of the disappearance to be made in order to make an informed decision regarding the risks to which the person(s) or community are likely to be exposed. Judgements made at this point will have a significant effect on the efficiency of the investigation.

5.5 The Missing Person Additional Investigative Considerations document provides a comprehensive guide to officers involved in missing person investigations.

5.6 The Initial Attending Officer must:

- Obtain initial information regarding the missing person (Refer to Missing Person Aide Memoire for guidance). This information should be recorded and retained by the Initial Attending Officer to allow the Missing Person Investigation Form to be completed on return to the office.

- Obtain witness statements from the informant and family/friends or other significant witnesses that have had contact with the missing person recently in order to gather vital information about the missing person and their movements.

- Conduct a risk assessment of the missing person (Refer to Section 11 of the Missing Person Investigation SOP – Risk Assessment and the Missing Person Aide Memoire for additional guidance). The risk assessment guidelines are detailed below.

  **HIGH RISK**
  The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the Missing Person is in danger through their own vulnerability; or may have been the victim of a serious crime; or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.

  **MEDIUM RISK**
  The risk posed is likely to place the Missing Person in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.

  **LOW RISK**
  The apparent threat of danger to either the Missing Person or the public is low.

- The risk assessment should be recorded and retained by officers and added to the Missing Person Investigation Form. This risk assessment is mandatory for every missing person.

- On completion of the risk assessment, a supervisor must be notified immediately, **in all cases**, to ensure a review of this risk assessment is made at the earliest opportunity.

- Establish which police systems have been checked by the ACR and consider any other appropriate system checks that may provide information regarding intelligence, vulnerability, or lifestyle about the missing person which will aid the risk assessment process. Refer to for Internal Database checks within Missing Person Additional Investigative Considerations.

- Circulate a look out request for the missing person via ACR. Give consideration to implementing a media strategy to support the investigation (See Section 12 of the Missing Persons Investigation SOP).
• Obtain a recent photograph of the missing person where appropriate.

• Conduct a thorough search of the missing person’s home address / normal place of residence, and / or the area or place the missing person was last seen. (See Section 11 Missing Persons Investigation SOP)

• Search any vehicle the missing person may have access to.

• Establish where the missing person frequents and make all immediate enquiries in order to try to locate the missing person as quickly as possible, including house-to-house enquiry.

• Submit PNC marker request for the missing person or any vehicle they may be using as soon as possible.

• Consider the use of ANPR if the missing person is known to be travelling in a specific vehicle.

• Identify a Single Point of Contact for the Police contact with the family, assess levels of support required for the family / missing person and give information regarding other organisations that may be able to assist or support them (see Section 41 of the Missing Persons Investigation SOP – Support Services).

• Carry out checks with local buses / trains / ferries or taxis for sightings of the missing persons. Further information in relation to travel can be found within the Operational Guidance for Officers submitting a Transport Scotland/NECPO Information Request and the Memorandum of Understanding between Concessionary Travel and Integrated Ticketing Unit within Transport Scotland, the National Entitlement Card Programme Office, PSoS and British Transport Police;

• Check hospitals to establish if the missing person has been admitted.

• Check all relevant CCTV systems as early as possible so as to prevent any potential loss of footage, for possible sightings of the Missing Person or other pertinent information. Care should be taken around CCTV, as initial sightings are often proved to be false and can hinder an investigation.

• Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime

• From the initial information gathered consider immediate and appropriate actions and also make reference to the Missing Person Additional Investigative Considerations.

• Complete the Missing Person Investigation Form with all relevant information and actions carried out.

5.7 Printable guidance for initial attending officers can be found in the Missing Persons Investigation Operational Guidance document.

6. Supervisor Responsibilities - Sergeant

6.1 Missing person investigations must be meticulously supervised. This role cannot be over emphasised.
6.2 The initial supervision of all Missing Person investigations is the responsibility of the Sergeant. In certain areas, on occasion, there may not be a Sergeant or Inspector on duty. In situations such as these, supervisors in neighbouring areas must take responsibility. All supervisors must be alert to the fact that calls which initially present as “Concern For” calls (See Section 2 of the Missing Persons Investigation SOP), dropped 999 calls etc, may, following initial enquiries and risk assessment, merit the progression of a Missing Person investigation.

6.3 The role of the Sergeant should be proactive and intrusive with the objectives being:
- effective re-assessment of risk
- reviewing and documenting actions and decisions
- proportionate allocation of resources

6.4 The Sergeant must:
- Review and assess the initial risk assessment carried out by the Initial Attending Officer (Refer to Section 11 of Missing Persons Investigation SOP – Risk Assessment and the Missing Person Aide Memoire for additional guidance).
- Review all actions carried out to date to ensure the appropriate response (e.g. searches, database checks) is provided to try to locate the missing person. The Missing Person Additional Investigative Considerations document provides a comprehensive guide to officers involved in missing persons investigations.
- Ensure an immediate and longer term investigation plan is in place.
- Ensure that all decisions are recorded along with appropriate rationale.
- Consider the level of resources required to ensure an effective investigation.
- Consider an early media release in consultation with Corporate Communications or Area Control Room Supervisor (refer to the Lord Advocate Guidelines on the Police and the media and the Corporate Communications – Missing Persons Considerations and Guidance).
- Appoint an investigating officer for the investigation. This in many cases may be the Initial Attending Officer. In all missing person investigations an officer should be dedicated to the investigation and ownership clearly recorded on the Missing Person Investigation form. There are three levels to this:
  - In LOW RISK investigations an officer should be allocated from patrol duties to carry out investigations along with dealing with day to day calls.
  - In MEDIUM RISK investigations the investigating officer’s primary role would be the missing person investigation.
  - In HIGH RISK there will be an escalation in command structure supported by a dedicated investigation team.
- Consider the involvement of specialist resources, either immediately or as the investigation progresses, for example Criminal Investigation Department, PolSA / Search Manager, Communications Investigation Unit, Internet Investigation Unit and Cyber Crime Unit.
• Ensure an effective briefing of the oncoming Sergeant and continuity in the investigation.

• Ensure that the Inspector is notified of all High Risk missing persons immediately and in Low and Medium cases inform the Inspector as soon as practicable.

• Consider resourcing implications which require to be discussed with the Inspector.

6.5 Printable guidance for Sergeants can be found in the Missing Persons Investigation Operational Guidance document.

7. Supervisor Responsibilities - Inspector

7.1 The Inspector is responsible for the initial overall management of all missing person investigations until the risk assessment dictates otherwise and an alternative chain of command takes primacy. Where this is the case the command level will escalate and an Officer in charge (OIC) / Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) may be appointed.

7.2 The Inspectors role is to ensure the Missing Person investigation is supervised effectively and has the appropriate level of resources allocated. Early and effective command and control is vital in the initial stages of every Missing Person investigation. The Inspector must identify, when the situation has the potential to be a critical incident, communicate this to others and co-ordinate a response which maximises the potential to achieve a desirable outcome as quickly as possible.

7.3 The Inspector must:

• Review and evaluate all the information available and agree or amend the initial risk assessment, ensuring the proportionate response to the risk (Refer to Section 11 of the Missing Persons Investigation SOP – Risk Assessment and the Missing Person Aide Memoire for additional guidance).

• Ensure appropriate ownership has been allocated to the investigation and clear responsibility is recorded.

• Maintain an overview of the actions / enquiries, reviewing those in progress, analysing those that have been completed and ensuring proportionality of resource to the risk assessment. Ensure that all actions are recorded on the Missing Person Investigation Form. The Missing Person Additional Investigative Considerations document provides a comprehensive guide to officers involved in missing persons investigations.

• Fully understand the nature of the investigation and make daily revisits to the risk assessment utilising the most up to date information available to the investigation.

• Due to the dynamic nature of missing persons investigations there may be a need to upgrade or downgrade a response depending on the risk assessment.

• Consider obtaining other physical evidence such as fingerprints and / or DNA samples making sure a full explanation is provided in a sensitive manner.
• Ensure that all decisions are recorded along with appropriate rationale.

• Ensure that the Local Area Commander or nominated representative is briefed on all missing persons prior to local Tasking and Coordinating Meetings taking place.

• Ensure that the Divisional Operational Superintendent or on-call Operational Superintendent is informed of all High Risk missing person investigations as soon as possible. Where the investigation involves suspicion of a serious crime or other extreme circumstances including being declared a critical incident the Divisional Detective Superintendent or on call Divisional Detective Superintendent should also be notified as soon as possible.

• Consider whether the Missing Person investigation should be declared a Critical Incident as per the Critical Incident Management PSoS SOP

• In all High Risk cases and otherwise where appropriate, ensure early contact is made with a PoISA / Search Manager.

• Consult with Corporate Communications (or Area Control Room / Service Centre out of office hours) for any planned media release. An early media release should be considered in all High Risk cases. For additional guidance refer to the Lord Advocate Guidelines on the Police and the media and the Corporate Communications – Missing Persons Considerations and Guidance.

• Consider the implementation of a Community Impact Assessment refer to Community Impact Assessment PSoS SOP.

• Consider the involvement of partner agencies.

7.4 Printable guidance for Inspectors can be found in the Missing Persons Investigation Operational Guidance document.

8. Supervisor Responsibilities - Senior Management

8.1 At all stages of a Missing Person investigation, senior management must ensure that ongoing ownership, including lead responsibility of the investigation (SIO / OIC), is clear at all times. They must also ensure that the dynamic risk assessment is and remains appropriate and that a proportionate risk based response is being taken and accurate records are being maintained. In certain High Risk cases, good practice would see early Gold Group structures and meetings being established with investigations being treated as critical incidents, which may require multi agency meetings. See also the Critical Incident Management PSoS SOP.

8.2 Local Policing Commanders will have overall responsibility for ensuring that adequate resources are being deployed to all ongoing investigations and that an appropriate level of senior management has overall ownership and the appropriate lead (OIC / SIO) has been nominated.

8.3 In High Risk cases, the Local Policing Commander will ensure that appropriate strategic initial and ongoing management ownership is clearly identified. They will also ensure that missing persons feature each day at the local Tasking and Coordinating Group Meetings and any investigation decisions are appropriately recorded.
8.4 The Divisional Superintendent with Operational policing responsibility will have strategic oversight of all missing person investigations and through regular review will ensure the local response is proportionate to the ongoing dynamic risk assessment. They will ensure an appropriate (Police Incident Officer) PIO / OIC has ownership of the investigation. The Divisional Operational Superintendent or on-call Operational Superintendent will be informed of all High Risk missing person investigations as soon as possible by the Inspector (or in their absence the Sergeant) with responsibility for the Missing Person Investigation. In High Risk investigations where the investigation involves suspicion of a serious crime or other extreme circumstances including being declared a critical incident they will notify the Divisional Detective Superintendent or on call Divisional Detective Superintendent as soon as possible. Whether the SIO or OIC leads the investigation will depend on the unfolding circumstances.

8.5 The Divisional Detective Superintendent will ensure that CID reviews and ownership of reviews takes place as per Section 10 of this SOP. In all High Risk investigations Divisional Detective Superintendents will ensure that appropriate CID resources support the ongoing investigation and will ensure that a proportionate CID investigative strategy is adopted immediately. The need for a dedicated SIO and supporting investigation team will very much depend on the circumstances, however in all High Risk cases, proportionate CID resources and specialist investigative support must be considered. In High Risk investigations where the investigation involves suspicion of a serious crime or other extreme circumstances including being declared a critical incident, the Divisional Detective Superintendent will appoint an appropriate SIO depending on the circumstances who will assume ownership for the investigation supported by an appropriate OIC. The Divisional Detective Superintendent will have ownership for reporting the status of all High Risk Missing Person investigations to the Missing Person Unit.

8.6 Local Area Commanders will have responsibility and ownership for ensuring all Missing Person investigations are proportionately resourced, the dynamic risk assessment is and remains appropriate and that they feature each day at the local Tasking and Coordinating Group Meeting. They will ensure that daily management, local ownership and accountability for the Missing Person investigation are clear and complies with the expectation of the SOP at all times.

8.7 Each Division / Department has a local Missing Person Tactical Coordinator. It is their responsibility to provide quality assurance around the local missing person investigative process and compliance with the Missing Person Investigation SOP, develop safeguarding working practices with partners, communicate good practice to frontline officers, ensure that any training requirements around operational delivery are addressed and through time provide a higher level of knowledge around Missing Persons investigations locally.

8.7 Printable guidance for Senior Management can be found in the Missing Persons Investigation Operational Guidance document.

9. Investigating Officer

9.1 Consideration must be given to the level of resources and skill of personnel required to pursue an effective investigation. An Investigating Officer, of an appropriate rank must be appointed in all missing person investigations. The nature of the investigation will determine whether this is an operational or
specialist (CID) investigation. This will be based upon the risk assessment. The level to which the officer is dedicated to the investigation will depend on the circumstances of the case. (See paragraph 6.4)

9.2 It is acknowledged that on occasion this role may pass between individual officers however in all cases ownership should be recorded on the Missing Person Investigation Form

9.3 The Investigating Officer must:
- Assume operational responsibility for the missing person investigation.
- Refer to the Missing Person Additional Investigative Considerations for possible lines of enquiry.
- Ensure all indices, checks and circulations have been completed.
- If not already done, obtain a current photograph of the Missing Person (the Investigating Officer should return the photograph to the person who supplied it on completion of the investigation).
- Brief the Sergeant and Inspector of the progress of the investigation and any barriers to the investigation.
- Keep the initial informant or relevant family members updated with the progress of the investigation and ensure they are provided with appropriate levels of support and guidance.
- Ensure that continuity of the investigation is maintained. Where the investigation is re-allocated ensure the “new” investigating officer is suitably briefed. Document all changes in responsibility on the Missing Person Investigation Form.
- If the missing person is not found within 72 hours inform the UK Missing Persons Bureau. Notification can be sooner if required. (See Sections 17.3 and 22.2)

9.4 When communicating with the missing person’s family the Investigating Officer should:
- Provide a Single Point of Contact so the family can provide and / or request information on the investigation.
- Use reassuring and clear language.
- Explain the process of the investigation so the family know what to expect.
- Explain why particular information is being requested.
- Explain why searching the family home or other premises is necessary.
- Reiterate to the family that they play an important role in assisting the investigation.
- Provide the family with regular updates on the progress of the investigation and planned actions.
- Inform the family of missing person charities and / or local sources they can turn to for support.
• Work with the family and provide them with simple search tasks of their own (e.g. contacting family and friends, writing to organisations (churches, health boards etc).

10. Criminal Investigation Department

10.1 Detective officers have an important role to play in Missing Person investigations. Missing person investigations are often an indicator of a number of other factors which lead to a person going missing. On occasion, the initial report of a missing person may be the first report of a serious crime. The importance therefore of adopting an investigative mindset cannot be over stated and the use of officers with specialist skills to aid the process and review investigations should be considered to offer further advice.

10.2 In High Risk cases, this should be done by a detective supervisor as soon as possible. In cases where the risk has been assessed as HIGH; consideration should be given to the appointment of an SIO.

10.3 In all other cases this review should be considered no later than 48 hours after the report is made to the Police. Reviews by CID officers should be recorded on the Missing Person Investigation Form.

11. Risk Assessment

11.1 Risk Assessment is crucial to the Missing Person investigation. The purpose of the Risk Assessment is to identify the Level of Risk posed to the Missing Person or members of the public.

11.2 The risk grading determines the Police response and influences the investigative strategy and it is therefore imperative that all Missing Person Investigations are Risk Assessed appropriately.

11.3 A Risk Assessment must be made from the outset of the investigation. An initial, dynamic risk assessment should be undertaken by the initial call handler, based on the initial information available.

11.4 The initial Risk Assessment is also one of the key responsibilities of the Initial Attending Officer.

11.5 The Police Scotland Risk Assessment Tool, which can be found within the Missing Person Aide Memoire, comprises of 23 considerations which are designed to ensure that you consider all factors and circumstances that may impact on the risk grading.

11.6 Answering all 23 questions will assist you in making an informed decision on the level of risk. All officers engaged in the Risk Assessment process should use their professional judgement, allied to the information at their disposal, when determining the risk grading.
11.7 The 23 considerations should not be used as a verbatim questionnaire of the reporter. It would be inappropriate and insensitive to ask some questions as they appear, an example being “Is there an identified risk of suicide?”

11.8 The purpose of this risk assessment tool is to ensure that all available information is captured in order to identify the risks relative to an individual’s vulnerability, influences and past behaviour.

11.9 Many considerations will have been answered whilst gathering the initial information, however if questions remain unanswered it is important that information required is gathered through appropriate conversation and not insensitive or intrusive questioning.

11.10 Having obtained the initial information, captured the circumstances of disappearance and used the risk assessment tool to identify risks to the Missing Person or the public, the risk level should now be determined.

11.11 This is a subjective decision made in consideration of all factors using your professional judgement to decide whether a Missing Person should be categorised as either Low, Medium or High Risk.

11.12 The risk assessment guidelines are detailed below:

**HIGH RISK**
The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the Missing Person is in danger through their own vulnerability; or may have been the victim of a serious crime; or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.

**MEDIUM RISK**
The risk posed is likely to place the Missing Person in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.

**LOW RISK**
The apparent threat of danger to either the Missing Person or the public is low.

11.13 Initial Attending Officer must conduct a risk assessment of the missing person (Refer to the Missing Person Aide Memoire for guidance).

11.14 The risk assessment should be recorded as soon as possible and retained by officers and added to the Missing Person Investigation Form.
11.15 In the initial stages during dynamic investigations, officers will record the Risk Assessment on the incident Command and Control system (eg STORM). A Risk Assessment is mandatory for every missing person.

11.16 On completion of the risk assessment, a supervisor must be notified immediately, in all cases, to ensure a review of this risk assessment is made at the earliest opportunity.

11.17 Where a local Sergeant or Inspector is not on duty, supervisors from the nearest area will take responsibility.

11.18 The Sergeant must review and assess the initial risk assessment carried out by the Initial Attending Officer.

11.19 The Inspector must review and evaluate all the information available and agree or amend the initial risk assessment, ensuring the proportionate response to the risk. The Inspector must also make daily revisits to the risk assessment utilising the most up to date information available to the investigation.

11.20 The Divisional Superintendent with Operational policing responsibility will have strategic oversight of all missing person investigations and through regular review will ensure the local response is proportionate to the ongoing dynamic risk assessment.

12. Search

12.1 Search is an essential element to every missing person investigation. A systematic search can often locate a missing person very early on in a missing person investigation.

12.2 The three basic purposes of a search are:

- To locate the missing person;
- To identify any evidence or intelligence that may be connected with them;
- To establish whether a crime has been committed against the missing person.

12.3 In terms of search specific to POLSA there are four types of missing persons:

1. **Lost Person** – This is a person who is temporarily disorientated and would wish to be found, e.g., someone who has gone walking and does not know where they are;

2. **Missing person due to an accident, injury or illness** – this is someone who has met a sudden illness e.g. someone wandered off due to mental illness or struck by a hit and run vehicle;

3. **Missing person who is voluntarily missing** – This is someone who has control over their actions and who has decided on a course of action, e.g., they wish to leave home. It includes those who are missing and vulnerable because of mental health or other medical issues;
4. Missing person under the influence of a third party – Someone who has gone missing against their will, e.g., an abduction or murder victim.

12.4 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

12.5 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

12.6 Dependant on the circumstances consideration should be given to utilising personnel who are familiar with the location / premises being searched i.e. the people who work there.

12.7 It is also necessary to identify items which are no longer within the personal area and could have been removed by the missing person. Consideration should be given to requesting that the owner, occupier conduct a search of their premise to identify any missing articles.

12.8 Locations frequented and any routes that may have been taken by the missing person should also be considered for search. This includes any areas adjacent to, or nearby such routes.

12.9 Initial circumstances may dictate an urgent need to search a specific property. Dependant on the urgency and the lack of other means to gain access it may be necessary to force entry into a premise in order to quickly locate missing persons.

12.10 Common law powers provides that where officers are undertaking enquiries into missing or vulnerable persons and they are in doubt as to a person’s welfare, officers have the power to force entry to a premises without warrant in order to save life. This includes circumstances where an officer has reasonable grounds for believing that a person may be within the premises but is unable to respond or answer the door due to illness or injury.

12.11 Similarly, Section 35 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and also Section 292 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 both allow an authorised person (normally a mental health officer) to make application for a warrant to be granted by a Sheriff or Justice of the Peace. If granted, a warrant under these sections permits the authorised person and a Constable to enter a premise, by force if necessary and open lockfast places therein so to detain / take the subject suffering from a mental disorder. The relevance and powers of both sections a clearly illustrated within the Mental Health and Place of Safety PSoS SOP.

12.12 Details of all searches undertaken must be recorded on the Missing Person Investigation Form. These records should detail the area/premises searched, including search boundaries, timings and officers conducting the search. Any limitations to the effectiveness of the search, i.e. inaccessibility should also be recorded thereon.
12.13 Information obtained during the investigation may, at any time, influence any part of the search process. As such a constant review of the investigation and search strategy is required.

12.14 In the event that the initial search is unsuccessful and the enquiry is ongoing the Inspector may wish to seek the advice of a Police Search Advisor (PolSA) / Search Manager. Dependant on the circumstances, the risk grading and the overall urgency of the investigation early contact should be made with such PolSA / Search Manager.

12.15 The role of the PolSA / Search Manager is to support the Investigating Officer by providing advice on all aspects of the missing person search. Such advice includes the recommendation for search areas and search parameters along with the management and co-ordination of internal and external search resources. A complete description of the role and responsibilities of a PolSA during missing person investigations can be found in The PolSA Responsibilities in Misper enquiries located within the Search PSoS SOP.

12.16 A PolSA is trained in missing person search management if the search required to be undertaken is an area which is either urban, rural or a combination of the two. In incidents where a search is required in an area that is mountainous, in water or otherwise inaccessible areas which require specialist expertise, then a Missing Person Search Manager may be most appropriate to assist in the coordination and management of resources.

12.17 A Missing Person Search Manager may also support a rural search. In cases where both types of terrain are required to be searched, then it is appropriate to enlist the services of both a Missing Person Search Manager and a PolSA.

12.18 If both specialists are enlisted to support an operation, the PolSA holds the responsibility for the collation and presentation of all search information and liaison with the OIC.

12.19 A PolSA / Missing Person Search Manager will not take command of the overall Missing Person investigation.

12.19.1 Further guidance for mountain rescue, acute water search and missing person search is available within the Land Based Search and Rescue PSoS SOP.

12.19.2 All searches must be justifiable, proportionate to the circumstances and fully documented. The level and intrusiveness of any search will be dictated by the circumstances and the purpose of the search must be explained with compassion to the reporter or family member concerned. Remember this may be a crime scene.

12.19.3 Advice in relation to search with specific consideration for faith and religion can be found in the Diversity Booklet: A Practical Guide - Police Scotland.

12.20 Volunteer Searchers

12.20.1 During high profile missing person investigations, especially those involving young children, it is highly likely that members of the public attend at a search operation of their own accord and volunteer to assist. These circumstances
require careful management as the integrity of the search must be maintained whilst the best use of volunteers is also required.

12.20.2 A volunteer searcher is a member of the community who is willing to participate in a missing person search and is consequently tasked by Police for this purpose.

12.20.3 It should be clear that volunteer searchers are different from the volunteers of recognised search and rescue teams, HM Coastguard and other professional bodies. The members of such teams and bodies will not be deemed as volunteer searchers provided their participation in the search is a direct result of their professional body / SAR team being involved in the investigation.

12.20.4 Volunteer searchers should not be excluded from assisting merely on the basis that it may be difficult to manage them but PSOS should take cognisance that they are responsible for the welfare and health and safety of volunteers.

12.20.5 In order to maintain the reputation of PSoS and ensure that the investigation has continued public support, careful consideration must be given to the deployment of volunteer searchers and each occasion should be assessed on its own circumstances.

12.20.6 Where volunteer searchers are deployed it is good practice to enrol a volunteer coordinator whom can collate full details of all persons present whilst also assessing the suitability of volunteers based upon their age, fitness levels, equipment and experience. Remainder of this section has been removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

12.20.7 Trained Police searchers should always be deployed to areas where there is a high probability of finding something, especially if it is in relation to issues of preservation of life, evidence recovery or the prevention of trauma to volunteer searchers.

12.20.8 Regardless of this fact, clear briefings must be given to volunteer searchers detailing what they are looking for, where to search, what actions are to be taken in the event of a find along with health and safety issues. It is equally important that volunteer searchers are aware of evidence recovery, the potential for cross contamination and the importance of not divulging confidential information to the media. (i.e. Interests of criminal prosecution and potential impact on families).

12.20.9 Where required, the PolISA can give further advice and guidance with regards the deployment, registration and recording of volunteer searchers.

12.20.10 The media strategy can be used to encourage / discourage the arrival of volunteer searchers or explain that the most effective way to assist is to be vigilant, check their local area including their own property, garden or outbuildings.

13. Corporate Communications and the Media
13.1 Often a media appeal can help assist in tracing missing people. However, caution should be used when considering whether or not this is absolutely necessary. Usually a media appeal will be issued on occasions where an individual is particularly vulnerable, they show signs of harming themselves, or for those who are a danger to the public. A media appeal should not be seen as something which is appropriate in every missing person case. If missing person appeals become too common place the media will lose interest and simply cease to publicise these. The media in general will not publicise an appeal for a missing person unless there is something ‘newsworthy’ e.g. they are vulnerable, particularly young, elderly etc.

13.2 Any media appeal should be discussed with the family of the missing person / their carer or residential establishment staff member and ideally conducted with their consent. If they refuse or do not wish an appeal to take place this will then be a policy decision for the SIO / OIC.

13.3 In almost all cases, it is essential to issue a photograph of a missing person when appealing for information as to their whereabouts. However, on very rare occasions if there is no way of obtaining a photograph as detailed a description as possible could be issued.

13.4 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

13.5 Corporate Communications will be able to offer advice on whether it is appropriate to issue a media release regarding a missing person and the manner in which it would be best to do it e.g. a national appeal or a lower scale appeal perhaps via a local journalist or local twitter feed. If a media appeal is issued it is possible that media may wish to interview the officer in charge of the enquiry. Officers should therefore be prepared to respond to requests.

13.6 If a media release is issued it is vital that Corporate Communications are kept up to date with the status of your investigation e.g. if the missing person is located. As a general rule, no information regarding a missing person’s death will be issued until all appropriate family members have been informed.

13.7 Where a Media Strategy is implemented, details should be recorded and updated on the Missing Person Investigation Form.

13.8 For any advice and guidance in respect of a media strategy surrounding Missing Person investigation please contact Corporate Communications. Details can be found within the Corporate Communications Media Relations page on the PSoS Intranet and in the Missing Person Corporate Communications Considerations Guidance document.

14. Communications Investigation Unit (CIU)

14.1 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.
14.2 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

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14.5 Refer to Communications Data PSoS SOP or the CycComms Intranet Guidance for assistance or contact the Communications Investigation Unit via National Intelligence Bureau for further guidance. Contact information as follows:

Edinburgh (Monday – Friday dayshift until 6pm) - XXXX
Aberdeen (Monday – Friday dayshift until 6pm) - XXXX
Scottish Crime Campus, Gartcosh (24 hours 7 days a week) – XXXX

Information has been removed as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

15. Internet Research & Investigations

15.1 The internet and social networking sites are a rich source of information which can assist many missing person investigations. Not only can this tactic identify additional communication channels used by the missing person, it can also provide an insight into their lifestyle, domestic situation, recent life events and mind set.

15.2 All divisions have personnel that have completed the Research of Open Source Internet Emails (ROSIE) course, who have the skill set to conduct basic internet research to support a missing person investigation.

15.3 Under no circumstances should police officers or staff use their personal equipment, such as smart phones or tablets, to conduct online enquiries.

15.4 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

15.5 Where the missing person is considered as High Risk, contact must be made with the Internet Investigations Unit (IIU) where the necessary advice and assistance can be accessed. Assistance can also be provided in appropriate Medium Risk investigations.

15.6 Where there is an imminent threat to life or risk of serious harm the IIU provides an on-call service which can be contacted via Service Overview.

15.7 Please contact the Internet Investigation Unit for further guidance;
Telephone XXXX or
Email: XXXX

Information has been removed, as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

15.8 Further information can be found in the Internet, Research and Investigations PSoS SOP.

16. Family Partnership

16.1 It is imperative that a nominated point of contact maintains regular contact with the nominated family member or other contact to provide updates on the progress of the investigation.

16.2 Good practice highlighted in paragraph 9.4 should be followed where possible.

16.3 Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) are not routinely deployed in missing person investigation however on occasions they may be considered, refer to Family Liaison PSoS SOP.

17. Long Term Case Management

17.1 Missing person investigations may be the subject of review at any time and the length of time a person remains missing will undoubtedly have an impact on the risk assessment. Should any significant information come to light, this should trigger an immediate review.

17.2 Long term investigations are those over 28 days and should be reviewed by a Senior Officer who has been trained as an SIO. Early reviews will be essential in high risk investigations, especially those that are being treated as critical incidents and are subject to a Gold management structure. Further reviews will take place every 28 days for the first three months then at 6 monthly and 12 monthly intervals, then annually thereafter. Consideration should also be given to cold case reviews of outstanding missing persons. The Senior Management Team should be aware of all review findings.

17.3 After 72 hours Long Term Missing Person Circulation Form 096-002 must be submitted to information resources at XXXX and NCA at XXXX. This form will be held by the relevant department in IR and processed 14 days after the person has been reported missing.

17.4 On locating a missing person, Long Term Missing Person Cancellation Form 096-003 must be completed and submitted to XXXX and NCA at XXXX after locating/recovery of missing person.

Information has been removed, as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

17.5 The purpose of the Review process is as follows:
Review the level of risk;
Check for any outstanding and incomplete actions;
Quality assure actions already taken;
Set new actions and enquiries in order to bring the investigation to a successful conclusion;
Make recommendations about the management and ownership of the investigation;
Set future review date(s) as appropriate

17.6 All the above should be recorded as policy decisions within the review report.

17.7 Divisions will retain responsibility for the physical storage of documentation in respect of Long Term Missing Persons, including Review reports. The Missing Person Investigation – Initial CID and 28 Day Review Guidance should be used and retained with regard to CID Reviews, as described in Section 10 and for 28 Day Reviews. The Long Term Missing Person – Annual Review (Form 096-006) should be used to record annual review of Missing Person Investigations.

17.8 The National Missing Person Unit will monitor compliance for all reviews of outstanding long term missing persons.

17.9 The National Missing Person Unit will monitor review compliance for all outstanding long term missing persons.

17.10 Legally Declared Dead (Presumption of Death)

17.10.1 If during annual review, officers are made aware that a missing person has been legally declared dead, then the full circumstances should be documented on a subject report to the National Missing Person Unit, detailing the following:
• Court order details
• Date missing person registered dead.
• Confirmation that there are no longer any lines of enquiry.
• Next of kin spoken to.
• DNA obtained and submitted for profiling to ensure cross matching, should remains be located in the future.

17.10.2 A decision should be made as to whether the enquiry can be closed, based on the above information. If closed, the subject report, along with the National Missing Person Coordinators supporting comments, should be attached to the relevant Divisional Missing Person Report which will negate the need for future reviews. All paperwork should thereafter be packaged and filed as per procedures.

17.10.3 All Long Term Missing Persons Legally Declared Dead will be recorded and retained by the National Missing Person Unit.
18. Forensic Considerations

18.1 Early consideration should be given to obtaining DNA profiles, fingerprints and dental records of missing persons and unidentified bodies / body parts for submission to the UK Missing Persons Bureau. This procedure will be considered as part on any ongoing dynamic review.

18.2 DNA and the Missing Person DNA Database (MPDD)

18.2.1 The MPDD provides a service whereby DNA profiles, generated by an authorised Forensic provider, as part of a missing person enquiry, can be stored, searched and matched.

18.3 Hermes Number

18.3.1 The MPDD is administered on behalf of the UK Missing Person Bureau (MPB). The MPB is the UK national point of contact for all missing persons and unidentified body cases.

18.3.2 The MPDD functions as a secondary database to the MPB case management system, HERMES, which contains the primary data relating to a missing person investigation or unidentified human remains. The unique reference number (HERMES number) generated by the HERMES system is used to link records between the MPB and the MPDD. A sample cannot be loaded to the MPDD without a HERMES number.

18.3.3 The following samples should be considered when seeking to obtain a DNA profile from a missing person. The samples are listed in order of preference:

National DNA Database Record (NDNAD)
A DNA profile can be transferred from the NDNAD to the MPDD. This can be requested directly or by requesting that their Forensic Provider undertakes this on their behalf. If the individual has a profile on the Vulnerable Persons DNA Database their profile can also be transferred over, the same process as above applies.

Medical Sample
A medical sample from the missing person can be analysed. This includes samples such as non-cancerous tissue biopsy and Guthrie blood stain card, taken at birth. The Forensic provider will analyse the samples and forward the profile onto the MPDD.

Surrogate Sample
If 1 and 2 are not available the collection of personal items belonging to the missing person should be considered for analysis e.g. toothbrush, razor, licked stamp etc. The Forensic provider will analyse the samples and forward the profile onto the MPDD.

Kinship Samples
Kinship samples can be analysed to produce inferred profiles. It is the responsibility of the Police to ensure that consent is obtained from all Kinship sample volunteers before the samples are taken. Missing Persons Kinship Volunteer DNA Sample Consent, Form 053-003 should be completed for each sample and forwarded to the Forensic provider. The Forensic Provider will analyse the samples and forward the profiles onto the MPDD.
It is strongly recommended to collect as many kinship samples as possible to create the most accurate inferred DNA profile of the missing person.

Examples of relatives to be sampled are:

- Genetic mother and genetic father of missing person
- Child of the missing person and the other genetic parent of said child
- If only one parent is available then samples from all full siblings should be considered.

A single sibling profile will not provide enough DNA information to be searched against the MPDD. This profile can be stored from future use.

**DNA Samples From Unidentifiable Sources**

These samples include:

- Unidentified human remains
- Individuals who can’t identify themselves e.g. someone with memory loss.
- Possessions thought to belong to an unknown individual's e.g. trophies from murder.

The MPDD can be contacted on: XXXX

Information has been removed, as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

For full details on the use of the MPDD see Home Office - Procedures for Administering the DNA Profile Comparison Service for the National Crime Agency, Missing Persons Bureau.

For further guidance regarding Forensic Considerations on the subject refer to:

- UK Missing Persons Bureau – Procedures for Handling of Forensic Material
- UK Missing person Bureau: Dental Index Guide
- UK Missing person Bureau – Fingerprints Collection;
- DNA Sampling and Retention SOP

**19. Management of the Return**

19.1 Upon being traced alive, unless impracticable, officers should conduct a safe and well check and return interview with all missing persons.

19.2 The initial task is to check that the missing person is ‘safe and well’. This should not merely include a visual check, as often a person who physically appears to be well may in fact be concealing information which indicates the contrary. Where possible, officers should attempt to identify the causes and factors leading to the person going missing, as well as establishing what occurred whilst the person was missing. In order to do this, a return interview must be conducted. The information from this interview must be recorded on the Missing Person Investigation Form.
19.3 It may not be appropriate for this interview to be conducted on the immediate return of the person. It may also be the case that the missing person may be more comfortable speaking to persons, other than the police. It may be the case that other agencies such as support workers, care or medical staff, have a better rapport with that person than the police. The missing person investigation however should not be closed until interview(s) is / are conducted to establish the factors detailed within 19.2. It is the investigating officer’s responsibility to make sure return interview(s) is / are conducted.

19.4 Missing person return interviews are an important investigative tool to enable the police to:
- try and establish the reason the person went missing in the first place;
- establish where and with whom they have been;
- establish if they have suffered any harm;
- give the missing person the opportunity to disclose any offending by or against them;
- assist in identifying ways of preventing the missing person going missing in the future.

19.5 When Missing persons return they may feel guilty, ashamed and uncertain. Many will be unsure as to the role of the Police and fear they maybe arrested. Others will see the Police as their first opportunity for support and assistance. A number of local and national charities and voluntary groups can provide support to missing people and their families. (see Section 42 – Support Services).

19.6 With this in mind it is imperative that officers conducting return interviews demonstrate empathy and sensitivity towards the missing person in an effort to ensure positive interaction. Officers should refrain from being judgemental and avoid any direct or indirect reference to the individual as being a missing person. The missing person phrase is deemed by many as being a stigma, and individuals who have ‘taken a time out’ may not consider themselves as having been missing.

19.7 Officers should not rush the return interview; this is an important phase in the investigative process. The return interview gives the missing person the opportunity to talk of their experiences and allows the Police to learn of their behaviour whilst missing. Officers should not view the Return Interview as a final step in the closure of an investigation. It is important that the interviewee believes that the attending officers are interested in their wellbeing and the purpose of their attendance is not simply to enable the closure of the investigation.

19.8 All missing persons should be advised of professional bodies or charities that can assist in the provision of confidential support i.e. Missing People charity.

19.9 It is recognised that it may not be the investigating officer that sees or completes the missing persons return interview however it is their responsibility to ensure this process is carried out. Sporadic audits of the process will be carried out by Divisional Missing Persons Co-ordinators to assess whether procedures are being complied with.
19.10 In certain circumstances, the missing person may have been located but it is impractical to see them in their present circumstances, e.g. they have gone abroad. In these situations the investigation can be closed if from the evidence presented the person is considered safe and well and Senior Management have given their authority. The rationale leading to this decision should be recorded on the Missing Person Investigation Form.

19.11 All missing persons should be interviewed on return. This on occasions will not always be possible as indicated in 19.10 however there would be an expectation that liaison would be made with the relevant foreign law enforcement agency with a request to carry out a return interview of the missing person.

19.12 Adult Concern

19.12.1 Where an Adult that is a Missing Person is deemed to be at risk of harm to an extent they satisfy the three point criteria as defined in the Adult Support and Protection PSoS SOP then an Adult at Risk is to be submitted. Should there be a concern that the individual may be at risk of harm then an Adult Concern form is to be submitted. These submissions will, through Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (IVPD), be forwarded to the Divisional Risk and Concern Hub.

19.13 Child Concern

19.13.1 Where a Child is reported as a missing person and there is a risk of harm for that child then a Child Concern report is to be submitted through IVPD. Officers should take cognisance of the statutory obligation contained in the Children's Hearing Act 2011 regarding the provision of information to the Principal Reporter.

19.13.2 During the course of a Missing Person investigation if any Child Protection issues are identified then officers should respond in accordance with Child Protection procedures as defined in Child Protection PSoS SOP.

19.14 Missing Persons Cancellation

19.14.1 Missing person cancellations must be sent as soon as confirmation has been made of the missing persons return. These cancellations must include all outside Forces or agencies who have received notification of the missing person, in addition to CHS, PNC and the UK Missing Persons Bureau.

19.14.2 Particular consideration must be afforded to the case where notifying the family / associates of the missing persons whereabouts may put the missing person at risk, for example investigations involving Domestic Abuse, Honour Based Violence or Forced Marriage. On some occasions the Missing person may prefer not to have their location disclosed to family members. If any adult does not wish their whereabouts to be disclosed to the person reporting them missing, then their wish should be taken into consideration. The person reporting the adult missing should be told the missing person has been located and reassure them about their wellbeing.
20. Closure of Investigation

20.1 In order for a missing person investigation to be closed the missing person must have been found (alive / deceased). Investigations where the missing person has not been found will remain open and be subject to ongoing reviews. Where a Missing Person investigation is closed, the relevant section of the **Missing Person Investigation Form** must be completed.

21. Transferring Investigations

21.1 It is the responsibility of the division and the individual officer receiving a report of a missing person to complete the **Missing Person Investigation Form** even when it is clear that a report will have to be transferred to another division or out with Scotland.

21.2 Staff receiving the initial report are responsible for carrying out the initial procedures, capturing the relevant information and carrying out the initial risk assessment based on the information available at that time.

21.3 Ownership of the investigation will rest with the division covering the place from where the person has gone missing (unless circumstances and common sense dictate otherwise, however policing areas must be clear on ownership and therefore responsibility for progressing the investigation). The key issue is to consider where the bulk of the investigation lies and where is the greatest opportunity of locating the missing person.

21.4 The relevant Supervisor will authorise the transfer to another division or country once they are satisfied the initial enquiries have been undertaken and thoroughly recorded. There should be clear ownership when transferring the investigation and the decision to transfer and rationale should be recorded on the **Missing Person Investigation Form** to reflect this. Where primacy cannot be established locally refer to Senior Management. This must be documented on the **Missing Person Investigation Form**.

22. UK Missing Persons Bureau (MPB)

22.1 The Missing Persons Bureau is part of the National Crime Agency (NCA) and is the UK National and International point of contact for all missing persons and unidentified body cases as well as being the only UK agency focused exclusively on missing persons. It acts as the centre for the exchange of information connected to the search for missing persons.

22.2 The Investigating officer must:

- Notify the UK MPB when a missing person has been missing for 72 hours. (A supervisor may request the notification be done sooner if they feel the case needs urgent attention). Form 096-002 Long Term Missing Person Circulation should be used.
- Notify the UK MPB immediately if the missing person is a foreign national.
- Notify the UK MPB immediately if the missing person is a UK resident missing abroad.
• Send all reports of unidentified bodies or persons to the Bureau within 48 hours of being found, utilising Missing Person Unidentified Person - Alive 096-004 and Missing Person Unidentified Person - Deceased Body Found 096-005 forms. Further guidance can be found in Section 38.

23. Retention / Destruction of Records

23.1 The retention / destruction of Missing person reports will be in accordance with the Record Retention PSoS SOP.

24. Child Absconders

24.1 Across Scotland many local arrangements exist with partner agencies. Officers should make themselves aware of these local arrangements. (See Appendix ‘N’ for hyperlinks to local arrangements).

25. Safe Return of Child or Young Person Subject To Legal Order

25.1 Part 16 of the Children’s Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 provides information in relation to this.

25.2 The on-duty Supervisor is responsible, in line with their local protocols for directing all enquiries to trace child absconders, including:

• Close consultation with the appropriate staff of the Social Work Department, the person in charge of the residential establishment from which the child absconded and with other appropriate agencies;

• A child concern report/form should be submitted to partner agencies on every case where a child under an enforcement order goes missing. This enables partner agencies to have true picture of the behaviour pattern of that child.

25.3 When an abscondee is traced, the person in charge of the establishment concerned must be advised by telephone or in person and requested to send an escort. While there is no obligation on the Police to transport a child to their residential establishment, should the Social Work Department be unable to attend within a reasonable time scale, the on-duty Supervisor may, if it is felt expedient, have the child returned by Police.

25.4 If a child who has absconded resides within a residential placement whether under a compulsory order or otherwise, the social work department retain a duty of care for the child and must make appropriate provision to ensure the welfare of the child.

25.5 If the person in charge of the establishment from which the child absconded is unable or refuses to receive him/her, all options should be explored with the Social Work Department.
26. Offences of Harbouring

26.1 Officers should consider the appropriateness of offences under terms of Section 171 of the Children’s Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011.

27. The Child Abduction Act 1984 - Section 6

27.1 The Child Abduction Act 1984 provides legislation to deal with the removal of a child under the age of 16 years from the United Kingdom (UK) by a parent or other connected person in circumstances where there is disputed custody and where the purpose of removing the child from the United Kingdom is to frustrate the award of custody to the other parent by a court.

27.2 In circumstances such as these Officers should seek advice from Legal Services and refer to Child Abduction PSoS SOP.

27.3 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

27.4 Further information can also be found in the Kidnap and Extortion PSoS SOP.

28. Child Rescue Alert

28.1 Child Rescue Alert (CRA) is a partnership between the police, the media and the public that seeks the assistance of the public where there is valid concern that a missing child may be at risk of serious harm. CRA was previously established to be activated exclusively in the event of a child abduction but the CRA Practitioners Manual of Guidance published in January 2014 widens the scope for considering a CRA activation to focus on missing children that are thought to be at risk of serious harm.

28.2 The NCA CEOP Command manages CRA on behalf of police forces. The NCA offers advice and operational support to help investigate and publicise cases where a child is missing and thought to be at risk of serious harm with 24 hour tactical advice available through its control centre (XXXX).

28.3 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

28.4 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

28.5 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

29. Tracing Relatives
29.1 There will be circumstances where a person is reported missing, but where police involvement may not be necessary, for example tracing a long-lost relative. An assessment of the circumstances and risk must be made.

29.2 PSoS is not a tracing agency and there are other organisations that are better placed to do this, for example the national charity Missing People, the Salvation Army or Internet tracing services. Where the circumstances indicate that there is a present risk of harm to the person, further enquiries should be made to determine the nature of the risk or show that none are present.

30. **Wanted / Missing Persons**

30.1 There will be occasions when a person may be considered as both a wanted and a missing person. This may be a person who is wanted for an offence, an absconder from lawful Care or Custody Order or is Absent Without Leave (AWOL). On these occasions it is normal to deal with them as a Wanted Person not as a Missing person. There may however be circumstances where the person should be treated as missing. This will generally be where they are considered to be at risk of harm by, for example, their own actions or by a third party.

30.2 Wanted persons for whom a **Missing Person Investigation Form** should be raised and a missing person investigation effected may include:

- Persons wanted after absconding or escaping from Police custody, private contractual custody, Her Majesty’s (HM) Prisons, Young Offenders Institutions etc and having been reported as such by the appropriate authority where required;
- Abscondees from residential establishments, including those failing to return from weekend leave and those who abscond from persons under whose control they have been placed by a Supervision Order;
- Persons in breach of Standard Licence Conditions which apply to all licences whether on extended sentence, life, discretionary parole or non parole cases, order of recall, issued by the order of the Secretary of State and notified to the Police for action; individuals who have been detained under a Compulsion or Restriction or other Order issued in accordance with the Mental Health Acts, and who have escaped/absconded or gone missing.

30.3 Wanted persons for whom a missing person form should normally **not** be raised include:

- Persons suspected of committing crimes or offences where either no power of arrest exists or insufficient evidence is available to justify arrest (for example for whom a Locate Trace marker is placed on PNC);
- Deserters or absentees from HM Armed Forces;
- Persons whom it is desired to trace, for example for service of summons/citation, witness etc;
- Persons for whom a warrant has been issued.

31. **Missing Sex Offenders**
31.1 The Missing Person definition detailed at Section 2 should be applied to offenders subject to the notification requirements under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Where a Registered Sex Offender is deemed to be missing, a **Missing Person Investigation Form** will be completed and on all occasions these investigations will be graded as High Risk. For further guidance refer to the Offender Management PSoS SOP.

32. **Escape / Abscond / Fail To Return From Custody**

32.1 This can occur when a prisoner escapes, absconds or fails to return whether having initially been in Police custody or the Police are notified by the Court Custody Prisoner Escort Service (CCPES) or the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) of an escape, abscond or failure to return by a prisoner.

32.2 An escape is when a prisoner breaks a perimeter security barrier or evades a secure escort. Everything else will be classed as either an abscond or fail to return.

32.3 An assessment should be made to determine the person's status as wanted or wanted and missing taking into consideration all the available information. Conventional enquiries should be carried out to locate and apprehend the individual.

32.4 When prisoners are recaptured, they will be treated as a custody and subject to a Police report to the Procurator Fiscal:

32.5 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

32.6 All relevant agencies must be informed.

32.7 A person who is unlawfully at large (for example licence revocation) from another jurisdiction in the UK, or the Channel Islands, can be taken to a Scottish prison or young offenders institution, until arrangements can be made for his/her return to that jurisdiction. Any prison establishment receiving such a person shall have responsibility for arranging his/her return.

33. **Authorised Temporary Absences of Prisoners from Penal Establishments**

33.1 Prisoners of penal establishments may be granted temporary absence for a specified period of time by the governor of that establishment. In line with protocols agreed with the SPS, certain prisoners granted such leave will be notified to PSoS where it is assessed by the governor that the prisoner may constitute a danger to the public.

33.2 The need to give notice to the Police is most likely to arise where a prisoner is escorted out of the establishment for a specific purpose, for example to attend Court.
33.3 The responsibility for preventing the escape of inmates of penal establishments rests entirely with the prison service. Police Officers should not undertake any direct supervision of inmates on temporary absence which would tend to relieve the prison service of this basic duty. In most cases, it will be sufficient that the Police have knowledge of the inmate’s presence in their area at the relevant time.

34. Fugitive Offenders - Abroad (Out with the UK)

34.1 When a person accused of a crime has gone to a foreign country, he / she may be brought back for trial by virtue of special treaties between the UK and that country. This does not however apply to all countries.

34.2 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

34.3 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

34.4 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

35. Missing From Hospital – Compulsory / Voluntary Patients

35.1 When a person absconds or goes missing from hospital, they can be more vulnerable to harm. Each incident must be risk assessed in consultation with the hospital staff and appropriate action taken to safeguard the wellbeing of the individual and the public at large.

35.2 The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 outlines the provisions that exist in Scotland for the care and treatment of people with mental disorder issues. It is incumbent on Police Officers and Police staff to respond effectively when mental disorder is apparent.

35.3 In many cases a person is not necessarily offending when they are encountered by Police and it is important that any response avoids criminalising the person by apprehending or charging them when an alternative solution can be found.

35.4 Mental Health and Place of Safety PSoS SOP will assist Police Officers in their responses to a mental health incident.

35.5 People in need of an in-patient service can be regarded as voluntary patients free to leave hospital at any time or formal patients, those detained under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and held in hospital often against their will. A third category Restricted Patients are detained under a variety of pre-disposal and post-disposal orders made under the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 as amended by the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.
35.6 A guiding principle of an in-patient service is to provide the least restrictive environment.

35.7 Section 297/298 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 confers a power on Police to remove a person from a Public Place to a Place of Safety (see paragraph 34.13) when they are suspected of having a mental disorder and when they are considered to be in need of immediate care or treatment. The person may be detained for up to 24 hours.

35.8 Police Officers should be aware that when a person is reported missing from hospital, their 'patient' status will have a bearing on the options available while tracing the person. The hospital will do their own initial risk assessment which will inform their decision as to when they will report the matter to the police.

35.9 Across Scotland, local arrangements exist with Mental Health establishments. Officers should make themselves aware of these local arrangements. (See Appendix N for hyperlinks to local arrangements)

35.10 Voluntary Patient

35.10.1 When a voluntary patient is reported missing Police Officers have no power to return the person to the hospital. If the person is traced the options available to the officers are:

- The person returns voluntarily; or
- The hospital invokes an Emergency Detention certificate removing the voluntary status; or
- The person has a mental disorder and they are considered to be in need of immediate care or treatment then these officers can use the provision of Section 297 of the Act (see paragraph 34.13); or
- Following consultation with supervisors and the hospital then it is agreed that the patient is no longer in need of immediate care or treatment then no further action is required.

35.10.2 When the person is traced within a private dwelling, and entry is refused or the person refuses to return voluntarily and there are no grounds for invoking common law powers then a warrant should be obtained by a Mental Health Officer in order to allow Police Officers to effect entry by force if necessary. The person’s conveyance to a place of safety should thereafter be by NHS transport unless there is a risk of violence by the person.

35.11 Compulsory Patient

35.11.1 A person is a compulsory patient if they are subject to an Emergency Detention Certificate, a Short Term Detention Certificate or a Compulsory Treatment Order. Where a compulsory patient has absconded, Section 303 of the Act permits Police Officers to return them to the place where they are receiving care and treatment. However, where a person is traced within a private dwelling and refuses Police entry, a Section 292 Warrant should be obtained by a Mental Health Officer before Police Officers can effect entry by force, if necessary. The person’s conveyance to a place of safety should thereafter be by NHS transport
unless there is risk of violence by the person.

35.11.2 Where in the case of a patient who is subject to a Compulsory Treatment Order, the patient's unauthorised absence has continued for a period of three months, the Order shall cease to have effect.

35.12 RESTRICTED PATIENT

35.12.1 Restricted patients are persons detained in hospital under a Compulsion Order with a Restriction Order.

35.12.2 A person who is a restricted patient has usually committed an offence punishable by imprisonment, however, as a result of mental disorder, are not imprisoned but ordered to be detained in hospital for treatment without limit of time.

35.12.3 The Health Service are the responsible authority in relation to restricted patients. Refer to the Scottish Government’s Memorandum of Procedure on Restricted Patients.

35.13 PLACE OF SAFETY

35.13.1 The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, Section 300 defines a place of safety as:

- Hospital;
- Premises which are used for the purpose of providing a care home;
- Any other suitable place (other than a Police Station) the occupier of which is willing to temporarily receive mentally disordered persons.

35.13.2 The Act permits a person to be removed to a Police Station when a place of safety is not immediately available. This is the only circumstance in which a Police Station can be used as a place of safety. The person should be detained in a Police Station under this power for as short a time as is possible and in any case for no longer than it takes to make more suitable arrangements for the person's care and treatment.

35.13.3 The Act stipulates that as soon as reasonably practicable after removing a person to a place of safety, the police must ensure the Director of Social Work in the relevant Local Authority and the person's nearest relative are informed of specific information.

35.13.4 In addition the Police have a statutory requirement to inform the Mental Welfare Commission of the same information, when a person has been removed to a place of safety, within 14 days beginning with the day on which the person was removed to the place of safety.

35.13.5 The specific information to be provided is:

1. Name and address of the relevant person
2. Date and time which the relevant person was removed from the public place
3. Circumstances giving rise to the removal of the relevant person to the place of safety
4. Address of the place of safety
5. Where a police station has been used as the place of safety, the reason why the person was removed there.

35.13.6 In circumstances such as these a concern form/report must be submitted via the Interim VPD system or the Public Protection Information Units.

36. **Children Missing From Education and NHS Missing Family Alert Protocols**

36.1 Children and young people may disappear from the view of schools and education authorities for many reasons.

36.2 Children missing from education are children and young people of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not being educated otherwise (at home, privately or in an alternative provision). Remainder of section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

36.3 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

37. **Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

37.1 Where a person is reported to the Police as missing and it appears they may have entered the country without the appropriate authority, the decision about whether this report should be dealt with by the Police will depend on the circumstances of disappearance and risk. In some cases, the person may be evading lawful authority and should be dealt with as a wanted person.

37.2 It is not always possible to establish the true identity of the person or whether they are intentionally missing in order to establish a new life in this country.

37.3 Where an asylum seeker is not where they should be, the agency having responsibility for them should make enquiries before any report is made to the Police.

37.4 If the person is an adult, it should be ascertained whether there are any suspicious circumstances or any information that they have come to harm before they are considered to be missing. In terms of children, they can be very vulnerable in such cases. Each individual case would be risk assessed and if there was any cause for concern in respect of the child's safety then they would recorded as a missing person.

37.5 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.
37.6 Safeguarding issues must take priority and this should be the responsibility of all agencies. The UK Border Agency has a duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

38. Unidentified Found Persons – Alive

38.1 Following a Criminal History System (CHS) speculative check, a description of a found person should be circulated. A report should be raised and full descriptive details of any unidentified persons must be entered onto the PNC as soon as practicable.

38.2 The on-duty Supervisor (Sergeant) with responsibility for the investigation should interrogate the PNC and check the details entered in respect of the found person prior to entering the relevant PNC ID number on the relevant Report.

38.3 The Investigating officer shall be responsible for checking outstanding missing persons / abscondees in respect of found persons circulated by other areas.

38.4 The investigating Officer should ensure that the found person is interviewed, fingerprinted utilising Livescan in an attempt to identify the found person. Advice should be sought from the DNA Section at the Forensic Laboratory regarding the taking of DNA for identification purposes.

38.5 Details of unidentified persons should be reported to the National Crime Agency Missing Persons Bureau within 48 hours of the person being found. It is not unusual for forces to circulate details of unidentified bodies or persons to other forces during the early stages of an investigation. Notification to the Missing persons Bureau should supplement this.

38.6 A medical examination of the found person should be carried out to see if there are under underlying health problems.

38.7 If no identification is made within the UK, details of unidentified persons may be circulated via Interpol through use of the Interpol Yellow Notice forms. All such enquiries must be directed to the International Assistance Unit, National Intelligence Bureau at XXXX.

Information has been removed, as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

38.8 Corporate Communications should be contacted to establish what media circulations can be made in an attempt to identify the unidentified person.

38.9 The on-duty Supervisor must contact the local Social Work Department to establish the measures which are available to care for the unidentified person until his/her identity is known.
39. Unidentified Found Body / Body Parts - Deceased

39.1 The first Officer attending the scene of a found body must ensure that medical assistance is sought to establish whether life is extinct or otherwise, unless it is apparent from the state of the body that it is incompatible with life, for example decapitation, advanced decomposition. Officers must thereafter preserve the locus with cordons and commence a log.

39.2 The CID must be contacted immediately on the discovery of any body or body part in order that the subsequent investigation is appropriately directed and allocated.

39.3 Advice should be sought regarding the attendance of Scene Examination Unit, as well as Forensic Support.

39.4 Following a CHS speculative check, a description of a found body, or where appropriate the body part, should be circulated. A report must be raised. Full descriptive details of any unidentified bodies or body parts found must be entered onto the PNC as soon as practicable.

39.5 Where an unidentified body or body part is found, fingerprinting is to be considered as an aid to establishing identification. If fingerprinting is not possible or does not lead to the body/body parts being identified a sample capable of submitting for DNA comparison is to be obtained as soon as possible. Consideration should also be given to the obtaining of a dental chart or a sample capable of submitting for DNA comparison is to be obtained as soon as possible. Advice on these matters should be obtained from Forensic Support. Reference can also be made to the guidance documents listed at Section 18.

39.6 Details of unidentified persons, found bodies or body parts should be reported to the Missing persons Bureau (MPB) within 48 hours of being found. It is not unusual for forces to circulate details of unidentified bodies or persons to other forces during the early stages of an investigation. Notification to the MPB should supplement this practice.

39.7 Unidentified body/parts should be fully documented, to ensure Police Scotland is able to fully comply with information requests.

39.8 Officers should ensure the relevant notification forms are submitted to UK Missing Person Bureau for notification. Missing Person Unidentified Person - Alive 096-004 and Missing Person Unidentified Person - Deceased Body Found 096-005

40. International Issues

40.1 Sometimes a UK Police Force becomes involved when a UK resident is reported missing whilst abroad. Interpol is the single point of contact for making requests for enquiries to be made abroad and the appropriate unit is staffed 24 hours a day. Interpol will liaise with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office when appropriate. If there is a reason to suspect that a missing person is in a foreign country, the Interpol persons desk will arrange for details of that person to be forwarded to the country / countries concerned.
40.2 Any reports of missing persons overseas will firstly be investigated by the relevant agency within the country where they went missing. If the matter is reported within the UK then a UK Police Force may decide to commence their own investigations. Should it be necessary to liaise with overseas counterparts then this should be initiated via contact with Interpol who will offer the appropriate guidance and advice.

40.3 The International Assistance Unit (IAU) at the National Intelligence Bureau should be contacted with any requests for assistance from Interpol. The IAU provide an on-call facility via the Duty Officer, Service Overview for out of hours contact or can be contacted at the email address: XXXX

Information has been removed as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

40.4 **Schengen Information System (SIS II)**

40.4.1 The Schengen Information System is an EU-wide IT system that enables all participating member states to share real-time information on persons and objects of interest to law enforcement via a series of ‘Alerts’. The system is currently in its second generation and therefore is commonly referred to as ‘SIS II’. The UK connected to SIS II on 1 October 2014.

40.4.2 This system includes the capability to circulate details of missing persons through the creation of ‘Article 32 Alerts’. All individuals circulated as missing on PNC will automatically be circulated as missing on SIS II. At the time of creating a wanted/missing marker on PNC, officers will be required to complete fields to allow the creation of the Article 32 Alert on SIS II. When an alert is created, a SIS II ID number is generated on PNC. This number should be recorded within the Missing Person Investigation Form/System and will be used in all correspondence with the UK SIRENE Bureau, which oversees SIS II. In the UK the SIRENE Bureau is based in the National Crime Agency alongside Interpol.

40.5 **Circulating a UK Missing Person**

40.5.1 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.5.2 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.5.3 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.5.4 **Note**: Is there a DNA profile, fingerprints, or a good quality recent photograph available? These need to be available on request, and do not need to be sent with the alert.
40.5.5 You MUST ensure a PNC located report is submitted (this is a new PNC report type) when a person is located, as this will cancel the SIS II alert, ensuring they are not stopped unnecessarily (e.g. if travelling abroad).

40.6 Geographic Targeting

40.6.1 If information is known that the person is in a specific SISII country an officer is able to target the Alert to that country through the use of Geographic Targeting. Details should be submitted to the SIRENE Bureau on an ‘M’ form.

40.7 Linked Alerts

40.7.1 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.7.2 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.8 Additional information MUST be accessible

40.8.1 Should a missing person reported to Police Scotland be stopped in another country, a request may be sent to Police Scotland, via the SIRENE Bureau, for further information. For Police Scotland the Duty Officer, Force Overview, is the nominated 24 hour point of contact for SIRENE who will require access to the relevant information about the individual. This includes the reasoning for deeming the individual to be ‘at risk’, what action is required if a ‘JR’ or ‘AR’ individual is stopped, who should be contacted to assist with repatriation, as well as photographs or other identifying information for the individual.

40.8.2 Therefore all documentation relating to missing person alerts must be accessible 24/7 365 days a year.

40.8.3 This information should either be placed on the PNC report or be in a location accessible 24/7 and the location of the information must be recorded on the PNC.

40.8.4 This will allow the UK SIRENE Bureau to contact Police Scotland anytime day or night and access the information.

40.9 Long Term Missing Persons

40.9.1 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.10 Responding to a SIS II Alert following a Non UK Circulation

40.10.1 If a person is stopped in the UK and they have a SIS II Missing Person (Article 32) alert, the action required will depend on the vulnerability assessment.
40.10.2 A record of the SISII ID number from PNC should be noted - this ID number is required for all communication with the SIRENE Bureau.

40.10.3 SIS II does NOT give police additional powers to detain individuals. Therefore, if an adult is stopped and found to be a ‘Juvenile at Risk’ (JR) or ‘Adult at Risk’ (AR), they should only be conveyed to a place of safety if Scots/UK law supports this course of action.

40.10.4 Nothing under SIS II changes powers given to UK Law Enforcement and only existing domestic powers can be used. However, the existence of an Article 32 Alert may give officers extra grounds to suspect that the person with whom they are dealing is at risk, even if they do not appear to be.

40.10.5 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.10.6 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.10.7 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

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40.10.11 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.10.12 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.10.13 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.

40.10.14 Section removed in line with section 35(1)(a) of FOISA: information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime.
40.11 Person located outside the UK

40.11.1 Following the location of a UK circulated missing person in another SIS II country, the Law Enforcement Agency from that country will complete a process that will inform the UK SIRENE Bureau that the missing person has been located. Where appropriate, SIRENE UK will notify Police Scotland, cancel the SIS II circulation and complete the PNC found report.

41. Persons Lost At Sea

41.1 This applies to all persons reported lost at sea from a vessel travelling to or from ports within the UK, or where a vessel is passing close to the UK and the incident is reported to UK coastguards. It also includes cases of persons missing from offshore instillations, as well as those lost from areas of the UK coastline.

41.2 The Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) has responsibility for the co-ordination of civil maritime search and rescue within the UK and will assist the police upon request.

41.3 The Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (ARCC) for the UK and territorial waters is based at Kinloss Barracks and controls helicopters and other aircraft from a number of RAF stations. They are usually called by the MCA for assistance in sea-based incidents.

41.4 A Missing Person investigation must commence, with a missing person report being taken and police actions recorded.

41.5 At the earliest opportunity, an SIO must review the matter and assess if there is any possibility that the missing person is the victim of a crime.

41.6 Where the missing person has been reported lost from a vessel travelling to or from a port within the UK, the incident location will be the area of coastline which is nearest at the time. Where there is doubt, the location for the port of destination will be used. In such cases, officers must ensure that the forces responsible for both port areas are informed.

41.7 Any subsequent transfer of ownership of the missing person file (to another UK Force or country) should only be made after consultation between senior officers in the respective forces.

41.8 If the person is a Foreign or Commonwealth citizen, the relevant embassy or High Commission should be immediately informed. A report should be forwarded to Interpol to affect background enquiries in the appropriate country.

41.9 Any UK national reported missing from any vessel outside UK waters and reported to the UK (usually to Interpol) will be dealt with by the home force of the missing person or the closest relative of the missing person.

42. Support Services

42.1 Numerous charities and support services are available to provide assistance to both missing people and their families, during and after the event. Investigating
officers should identify and where appropriate offer the assistance of relevant local support services.

42.2 The following national charities may also be able to assist.

42.3 **MISSING PEOPLE CHARITY**

42.3.1 The Missing People charity (previously called the National Missing Persons Helpline) is a registered charity that works across the UK. The charity provides services to missing people, their families and police forces. Recommendations to use their free services sit within national guidance.

42.3.2 One of these services, TextSafe®, triggers the sending of a text message to a missing person informing them of the services offered by the charity. As the message is sent from the charity, those who might be hesitant to contact the police still have access to assistance from a neutral, confidential charity. Following initial contact with the charity, the missing person often initiates contact with the police, their family or social services.

42.3.3 Where appropriate, officers should ensure that families are informed of the role of the Missing People charity and the support services available to them by calling or texting XXXX or emailing XXXX.

Information has been removed as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

42.3.4 The Missing People charity can provide a tailor-made publicity campaign on any missing person investigation, anywhere in the UK. This can include print media, posters, digital billboards and web-appeals. It is important that communication links are established with the Missing People charity to ensure that this information is managed within the investigation. All requests for assistance must be carried out on behalf of the investigation by Corporate Communications.

42.3.5 For more information about making a referral, see:
Website: http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/police
Telephone: XXXX
Email: XXXX

Information has been removed as it is exempt in terms of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30(C).

42.4 **Breathing Space**

42.4.1 Breathing Space is a free and confidential phone line service for any individual, who is experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to. Free phone 0800 83 85 87 (6pm - 2am daily): Visit www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

42.5 **Samaritans**

42.5.1 Samaritans is available 24 hours a day and provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Lo-Call 08457 90 90 90 or visit www.samaritans.org
42.6 Barnardos

42.6.1 Barnardos is a charity committed to providing care and support for vulnerable children and young people. If required, please contact their regional office which can be found at www.barnardos.org.uk.