

<b>For Information</b>	
<b>Public</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Strategic Resources &amp; Performance</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Chief Constable Guildford</b>
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<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>6</b>

## Missing from Home Update

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner in relation to the performance and situational context of the Missing From Home Team (MFHT) Team.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of the report are noted.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To inform the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner of the Force's Missing from Home Team's activity and progress specifically in relation to:
- Demand profile
  - Risk assessment
  - Force and inter-agency response
  - HMIC findings and recommendations
  - Lessons learnt from other forces

### 4. Summary of Key Points (this should include background information and options appraisal if applicable)

#### 4.1 Demand profile.

Officers and staff working within our missing persons team deal with members of our communities who are vulnerable and often in crisis. During the period of national lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, our missing's team encountered a reduction of calls for service. A gradual return to pre lockdown demand commenced as restrictions were eased. Comparing the data from April to August 2021 against the same time period in 2020, Nottinghamshire Police experienced an increase of 34% for missing person reports, however, the majority of these calls for service were categorised as missing persons with no apparent risk. This categorisation of missing person

reports are dealt with within the force control room, following a detailed threat and risk assessment by a control room line manager.

During the period of lockdown itself, there was a significant decrease of missing reports.

In summary:

- The largest decrease was in April 2020, the start of lockdown, with a 47% reduction of reporting on the previous year.
- All indications are that the figures will continue to rise in line with pre-COVID levels. See below table for overview of totals:

**Overall Missing from Home demand: (Aug 20 -Jul 21)**

Incidents	Current (20-21)	Previous (19-20)	Variation	Percentage Variation %
<b>Total MFH Compact Cases</b>	<b>2568</b>	<b>2552</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0.7% ↑</b>
<b>Total Missing Individuals</b>	<b>1686</b>	<b>1760</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>4.3% ↑</b>

- The proportion of missing persons in the most recent performance year is split with 63% children and 37% adults.
- This is generally reflective of a standard reporting year in which we experience more missing reports for children, many of whom will repeatedly go missing, which is more attributed to their personal choice of lifestyle and behaviour.
- In 2020/21 the number of incidents relating to missing children reduced from 1875 to 1345 incidents which equates to a 28% overall reduction
- In the same period the number of adult missing reports had reduced from 981 to 898 representing an 8% reduction, but as discussed earlier, reports have increased post lockdown restrictions.
- Similarly, the average length of time that a reported person remained missing reduced from 45 hours to 29 hours. This represents a 35% reduction, and crucially, any reduction in time ensures that the threat and risk to that person substantially reduces. We are proud of this achievement, and with new technology, increased frontline officers and those within the missing team as a result of Operation Uplift, and greater inter agency co-operation, we are confident of driving this time down further.

The below table is a useful comparison, as theoretically, in September 2020, England was no longer fully locked down as a result of COVID-19, although many leisure facilities were still prohibited. The performance statistics reflected

in September 2021 is a return to pre lockdown demand in all areas. Our compliance in respect of return interviews remains at 100%, which shows our determination to support victims, and ensure that we fully understand triggers and trends to better support reducing future missing episodes.

**September 2021 vs September 2020 Performance figures.**

Incidents	Sep 21	Sep 20	Variation	Variation%
Missing reports	245	181	64 ↑	35% ↑
Under 18 reports	159	99	60 ↑	37% ↑
Average time missing	11.7hrs	7.98hrs	3.9hrs ↑	48% ↑
Reports from repeats	75	37	38 ↑	99% ↑
In care reports	45	21	24 ↑	114% ↑
Police return interview completion	100%	100%	N/C	N/C

**Missing No Apparent Risk Performance:**

Financial Year	Annual Total	Volume Change	Percentage change
2019/20	294 4	+79	+2%
2020/21	176 7	-1177	-39%

- As above, missing no apparent risks have significantly decreased in 2020/21 as shown, which is likely from the implementation of national lockdowns.
- The approach to MISNARS remains a force priority – Our control room Sergeants will risk assess these incidents every 6 hours in accordance with THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement) principles. This process repeats up-to a maximum of 72hours, at which point the incident will automatically be converted into a missing from home enquiry which is allocated to a uniformed officer
- Our approach to remove MISNAR from the continuum of missing persons is consistent with other forces nationally and supported by the National Police Chiefs Council. We will be reverting to a Low, Medium and High risk missing’s approach, and this change will be occurring towards the end of

2021. All partners have been engaged in regard to this policy change, and a new force training package will be delivered to accompany this relatively simple change.

## **4.2 Risk assessment.**

All missing incidents are subject to a full and detailed risk assessment, in accordance with our THRIVE principles. Safeguarding of vulnerable persons is fundamental, and missing from home incidents require supervisory oversight, to ensure that they are both graded correctly, and have the right resources assigned. A missing person can be upgraded at any point based on new information and intelligence. We continue to use COMPACT as a specialist system to record missing from home incidents, which is crucial in locating repeat missing persons, as pertinent information and action plans are securely stored. Many forces continue to use the COMPACT system to supporting missing from homes, based on the niche way it has been built to supporting this area of business.

One of the highest risks associated with missing individuals is Child Sexual Exploitation, which accounts for 11.5% (258) of reports. Of note, 91% of the individuals are female, whilst 57% of them are currently in the care system.

- The force continues to positively publicise the Herbert Protocol, supporting those with Dementia. This has seen a large growth of reports of missing persons with this condition, which enables a more accurate and detailed risk assessment to take place, often resulting in specialist tactics being implemented to help safely locate those persons.

Other points and factors that illustrate the critical importance of risk assessments are included below:

- There were 11 missing people who were found dead in 2020/21, equating to 7.4 deaths for every 1000 unique missing individuals. This is lower than national average which is 10 per 1,000 reports.

We continue to work closely with our street triage team and mental health institutions, to support those missing with acute mental health crisis.

The missing team in Nottinghamshire Police, consists of a locate and safeguarding function. The locate team consists of uniformed police officers whilst the safeguarding team are civilian staff with enhanced safeguarding knowledge and skills. This blended approach supports reactive operational work to locate, whilst proactive safeguarding support to help prevent re-occurrence and ensure best victim support. For the most risky missing persons, trigger plans exist in line with national guidelines.

We support the Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare approach to safeguarding, and have appropriate plans in place for all four areas.

## **Capacity & Capability.**

- Capacity levels within both the Locate and Safeguarding Teams are regularly reviewed, in order to address any concerns to ensure both teams can maintain their high standard of work and our ability to manage and respond to incidents.
- The missing team sit within the vulnerability hub in Nottinghamshire Police. In January 2022 they move into the new HQ at Sherwood Lodge, together with the force control room and real time intelligence staff. Whilst the monitoring of intelligence is currently good, this approach will ensure better joined up working, and ensure highly trained staff are aware when reports for missing persons are made at source. It is believed that this approach will help reduce missing times further, whilst ensuring detailed and accurate risk assessments, in providing tactical support to control room supervisors.
- Our missing team work closely with force intelligence analysts. A problem profile for missing persons was refreshed within the last 12 months, whilst performance is analysed in the departmental and force performance boards.

### **4.3 Force and inter-agency response and activity:**

The team works and meets with a significant number of agencies on a daily basis to assist with a collective response. These include Social Services (Placement Teams and Children's Officers), Health (NHS), Education and OFSTED as part of our Locate, Safeguarding and Prevent functions.

- **Multiple Missing & Hotspot Locations** – Monthly meetings with senior practitioners from internal and external agencies. Assess those most at risk from shared information and intelligence. This ensures responsibilities are allocated as required.
- **Multi-Agency Meetings:** Social Care/Education/Health – Discussion regarding specific individuals and formulate Safeguarding plans for all agencies. Police generally lead in these meetings to manage what is achievable.
- **Philomena Protocol:** Nationally recognised protocol for agencies to refer repeat missing persons to new partner agencies when that person/s moves to a new area ensuring information and intelligence is shared and members of the public at risk are better safeguarded.
- **Daily Contact** with Social Care when a person is missing to aid in locating the missing individual.
- **PPNs (Public Protection Notices):** Much like all cases of vulnerability, public protection notices are submitted by the missing staff, where the

criteria is met, in order for a triage process within the multi-agency safeguarding hub.

- **MFH Briefing Documents:** Attached to incident to assist response officers. This includes trigger plans for those identified with high levels of vulnerability and risk. These plans are designed to support officers with better intelligence to locate such persons far quicker and more safely.
- **Volunteers in Policing:** In 2019, we piloted a process whereby our volunteer in policing youth outreach worker would attend the 'Hot Spots' meeting, whereby those who are frequent and regular missing persons are discussed in a multi-agency setting. Conceptually, the youth outreach worker, was an option to bridge the gap that existed in coaching and mentoring for vulnerable and lonely youths. This process has been a huge success, with vast reductions in young missing persons identified in 2019, which led to the process being implemented fully. Each month we refer on average three persons into this scheme, for additional support.

#### **4.4 Progress.**

Progress has been positive, in terms of reducing the time that a MFH is missing, safeguarding and prevention work. We have positively introduced the Herbert Principle, improved mapping technology and ensured our teams are fully staffed.

#### **4.5 HMICFRS Recommendations and Improvement in Service.**

The last HMICFRS Inspection was in 2015. All the recommendations identified in 2015 have been implemented. These related to managing data, trigger plans for repeat missing from homes and improving our response to persistent and repeat missing children by integrated multi-agency responses.

#### **4.6 Lessons learnt from other forces.**

We continue to gather information from other forces and are part of the national learning framework. We are also interconnected with the EMCHRS Learning and Development model which enables better sharing of learning.

Each piece of information is assessed and where appropriate, is translated into an action and recorded in the '4P' action plan. The plan provides the basis for a monthly performance meeting which is chaired by the Chief Inspector who leads for MFH. This in turn is reviewed by the Force Strategic Lead (Superintendent) for MFH in a quarterly meeting as well as the monthly force performance board chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable.

## **5 Financial Implications and Budget Provision**

- 5.1 National statistics indicate the costing of an average investigation based on risk levels are that Low and Medium risk cases cost £2,500 and a high-risk case costs £8,500, which is no change since previous reporting.

- Recent investment in force, with the purchase an advanced mapping and telephony tracing application, which has helped reduce the time taken to locate missing persons. An example of its efficiency was the recent work done by the MFHT (using the application) that located a vulnerable 3-year-old who had been missing for nearly 2 years (from another Force area) in less than 7 days by the team within Nottinghamshire.
- The improvement in technology has supported the quicker location of Missing persons to a place of safety, who are inherently vulnerable through their situation. Furthermore, the faster and more effective location of missing persons is beneficial for the police service, in re-distributing resources to support other demand.
- From the continued developments and improvement in approach to MFH investigations (such as new National Protocol implementation, development of staff, better equipment, mapping, and phone) it is estimated to have delivered a £1.3 million saving across this area of business in the last 12 months, with a combined reduction of £1.75 million (based on time savings in medium risk cases) over the last 4 years.
- This calculation is based on a reduction of 535 reports over a 12 month period, with case costing an average of £2,500 per missing report.
- The continued use of new and emerging technology is likely to see further cost savings in front line officers search time and in the speed of locating persons, reducing the need to investigate the missing case yet further.

## **6 Human Resources Implications**

6.1 None

## **7 Equality Implications**

7.1 None

## **8 Risk Management**

8.1 There are no risks highlighted in this report

## **9 Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

9.1 There are no policy implications known or expected. The Force Missing Policy is due for revision in December 2021. The policy has been regularly reviewed or amended where required previously.

## **10 Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations**

10.1 None

**11 Details of outcome of consultation**

11.1 None

**12. Appendices**

12.1 None

**13. Background Papers (relevant for Police and Crime Panel Only)**

13.1 None