

The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner's response to the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) - Missing children: who cares? The police response to missing and absent children.

[The report can be found here](#)

On 23rd March 2016, HMIC published its report 'Missing children: who cares? The police response to missing and absent children'. HMIC inspected the police response to missing and absent children as part of its summer 2015 PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) effectiveness inspection of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. As part of this work, HMIC also assessed forces' preparedness to tackle child sexual exploitation, because children who go missing are at greater risk of becoming a victim of this kind of offending (with those missing from local authority care being particularly vulnerable).

HMIC found unacceptable inconsistencies between and within forces, across all aspects of the approach to missing children, whether in respect of assessing risks, investigating or supporting children leaving them unprotected, and at risk of serious harm. Also, going missing can be the precursor to various aspects of significant harm, such as abuse, criminal activity or mental ill-health, which can blight a child's life well into adulthood.

In response to the findings HMIC made a series of recommendations for the Home Office, National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constables and the College of Policing, aimed at ensuring the necessary improvements are made – and quickly.

I have the same concerns as HMIC and in my Police and Crime Plan (2016-18) one of my strategic activities I set for the Chief Constable was to "Work with safeguarding partners to increase awareness and understanding of child sexual exploitation, missing children, hidden harm and provide support to victims with partners."

The Force has a dedicated 4ACTION database for tracking and responding to HMIC recommendations and areas for improvement. **Annex 1** of this written response to HMIC provides an update on the current action taken by the Force to address the issues raised by HMIC. The Force provides regular HMIC update reports to my Joint Audit and Scrutiny Panel who provide additional scrutiny in these important areas.

Yours sincerely



Paddy Tipping
Police and Crime Commissioner

ANNEX 1 – FORCE RESPONSE TO HMIC RECOMMENDATION

- 1. By September 2016, chief constables should ensure that information management processes are in place which focus on outcomes for children who go missing, and to provide better analysis to understand the effectiveness of the police and multi-agency responses. Information should include the diversity of the communities the forces serve.**

Force Response: Action: The Force has reviewed the approach to missing from home enquiries across the force area and implemented a revised approach to ensure improved quality and consistency of service to this vital area of business. That includes:

- A thematic approach, with a dedicated team led by a sergeant, responsible for supporting all locate enquiries to find missing persons. These enquiries are clearly graded by risk. Within that assessment of risk, the vulnerability of children in particular is recognised. This includes close working with partner agencies.*
- A dedicated team of missing from home co-ordinators, led by a sergeant, responsible for all action to prevent repeat missing episodes and ensure effective safeguarding for vulnerable persons. This includes close working with partner agencies. This activity recognises and prioritises the vulnerability of children.*
- A Chief Inspector responsible for managing the locate and prevent/safeguarding functions;*
- The MFH coordinators ensure compliance with the NCSCB/NSCB protocol, which ensures, amongst other things, every child that goes missing is given the opportunity of a return interview, and the content of that is returned to police to feature in their “trigger” plan. Compliance with this protocol also enables timely strategy meetings which our coordinators attend.*
- Clear links with Public Protection and sexual exploitation unit regarding sharing of information, intelligence and identification of where investigations are required, particularly concerning vulnerable children.*
- Children at risk of sexual exploitation are identified, to ensure that information is available immediately for any missing episodes.*
- Carry over tasks for repeat missings are prioritised on our COMPACT system, as a trigger plan to drive immediate activity for future missing episodes;*
- An audit regime is in place to ensure consistent quality standards in missing from home enquiries.*
- A missing and absents performance dashboard is in place. This provides management information regarding current missings, repeat missings and data regarding numbers of missings – separated into children and adults The information includes gender, age and risk levels.*

- *All missing enquiries are managed on a daily basis, with intrusive supervision through the daily management processes, appropriate to the risk level. The vulnerability of children is a key feature of this.*