For Information	
Public	**Yes**
Report to:	**Strategic Resources & Performance**
Date of Meeting:	**6 November 2019**
Report of:	**CI 2284 Stapleford**
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Agenda Item:	**6**

IMPROVED RESPONSE TO MISSING PERSONS

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update the Strategic Resources & Performance meeting in relation to the performance and situational context of the Missing From Home (MFH) Team. This report covers: HMICFRS findings, recommendations and progress, the demand profile, risk assessment process, force and inter-agency response, and lessons learnt from other forces.

2. Recommendations

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

3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 To inform members of the Strategic Resources and Performance Board of the Force activity and progress.

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

4.1 Following the inspection by HMICFRS in 2015, below are the recommendations that were highlighted and subsequent action that the force has taken.

Recommendation: *By September 2016, Chief Constables should ensure that information management processes are in place which focuses on outcomes for children who go missing, and to provide better analysis to understand the effectiveness of the police and multiagency responses. Information should include the diversity of the communities the forces serve.*

A performance dashboard has been developed which shows a daily report of missing people. It provides monthly data from missing reports, breaking down the diversity and patterns within those reports. This provides a better analysis for understanding the effectiveness of the police and multiagency responses and helps to identify if there is a missing profile. This allows us to highlight and prioritise risk and vulnerability. The COMPACT missing person management system compiles statistical and fact based

information that is easily assessable. It is also used to record the investigative work undertaken and all safeguarding strategies and plans.

Two missing person 'problem profile' and threat assessments' completed in 2017 and 2019 provide the intelligence data that directs MFH team daily activity.

Management data is produced and used to formulate the agenda for a monthly multi-agency meeting, formally known as the 'Multiple Missing and Hotspots Meeting'. This meeting reviews persistent reporting locations within the Force area as well as the most frequent and vulnerable missing children within Nottinghamshire. The majority of names on the agenda are taken directly from the data provided by police systems. This meeting is well established and is attended by key stakeholders who formulate safeguarding plans. In recent months the Police Youth Vulnerability Outreach Worker has been embedded into these meetings and has fast tracked certain children into the Police Cadet scheme; as a result of this there have been reductions in missing episodes. Three case studies have been completed in relation to children referred to this Vulnerability Outreach Worker and Police Cadet Scheme. In case study one, the person was missing seven times prior to the outreach worker involvement and only once since. Case study two shows the person was missing thirteen times prior to the involvement with the outreach worker and only once since. Case study three shows the person was missing three times before the involvement with the outreach worker and zero times since.

Recommendation: *The information derived from 'return home interviews' should not be hidden in the depths of COMPACT but should be all together to create a trigger plan of response if the person goes missing again, rather than going through the checklist of things to do on COMPACT.*

Action: A force form has been created (G2109) which gathers pertinent information from the missing person upon their return. The details from these forms are reviewed daily and shared with partner agencies. Information is used to develop the trigger plan for that person should they go missing again. This prevention interview is compliant with APP guidance.

Recommendation: *The force should improve its response to persistent and repeat missing children by ensuring information from previous missing episodes is used to develop a co-ordinated and prioritised response.*

Briefing documents are completed for those who are considered vulnerable to or subject of Child Sexual Exploitation as well as those who meet the definition of 'persistent and repeat' missing. These documents, which contain intelligence and information on prior missing episodes and areas of vulnerability, are shared with Neighbourhood Policing Teams, other organisational departments and partners via multi agency meetings in order to prevent and reduce future missing episodes.

In order to prepare for future HMICFRS inspection we have gathered information from other forces to consider the recommendations that have been identified within their reports. As a result we have developed a MFH team '4P' HMICFRS action plan to ensure that Nottinghamshire Police is delivering in the areas identified within the other forces inspections.

4.2 The demand profile of Missing Persons within Nottinghamshire.

Total MFH reports for the past three years are: 3,548 (2017), 3,454 (2018), and 3,395 (2019). Demand appears to be relatively stable with no significant increases noted.

Due to a number of factors and outside influences that are beyond our control, predicting the demand of missing persons is difficult. The introduction of a dedicated missing from home (MFH) team, who conduct and implement comprehensive investigations and safeguarding initiatives enable us to target and reduce 'repeat' MFH incidents. It is however impossible to prevent reports that relate to people missing for the first time.

Current key areas of demand and risk are associated with child sexual exploitation, mental health, suicide, dementia and children missing from home and care settings.

Demand is likely to be impacted by reports of missing persons with criminal exploitation links to county lines. Although low in terms of the number of incidents reported, these are expected to increase. Nationally there has been a rise in awareness, risks and reporting of incidents linked to child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and mental health related incidents which highlights the importance of a dedicated force resource in the missing from home team. It is expected that over the next 4 years, demand will remain stable unless changes are made to policy nationally or local processes are significantly altered.

Mental health hospitals and compliance with joint protocols is considered a risk and further work is required with these establishments to ensure all required actions are completed prior to reporting someone as missing to the police. This is an area that could reduce demand for Nottinghamshire Police in the future.

Missing- no apparent risk

Missing no risk – when an individual is reported as missing, but there is no apparent risk identified in relation to vulnerability or their own risk as well as meeting other assessment criteria. This is managed through the control room, with actions advised to the family, and progressed accordingly. This is re-evaluated every 5 hours, and should the individual still be missing at 72 hours, a missing person enquiry is commenced.

Whilst data from 2016/17 to 2018/19 shows a general reduction in reports of 296 incidents (-9.4%), overall demand within this time period has been relatively stable:

- 2016/17: total no apparent risk reports – 3,161
- 2017/18: total no apparent risk reports – 3,164
- 2018/19: total no apparent risk reports – 2,865

These incidents are managed within the control room and officers are not dispatched for attendance. There are no statistics available to show the cost of managing these incidents.

<u>Missing persons</u>

These are incidents where officers are dispatched to instigate a missing investigation.

Figures from previous financial years for all Low, Medium, and High missing person reports:

DESCRIPTION	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL	YEAR
Missing Reports	263	254	262	319	228	231	46						1603	2019/2020
	283	351	334	306	291	271	273	270	252	253	247	264	3395	2018/2019
	242	302	351	318	266	324	320	305	249	279	241	257	3454	2017/2018
	264	299	278	327	280	333	286	305	264	262	312	338	3548	2016/2017

- 2016/17: total missing reports – 3,548
- 2017/18: total missing reports – 3,454
- 2018/19: total missing reports – 3,395

This represents a reduction of 59 incidents (-1.7%) on 2017/18 figures and -4.3% on 2016/17 figures.

The 12 month (to September 2019) 'rolling' picture of MFH reports shows even greater reductions:

- Total Missing reports: 3116 equating to 371 fewer incidents (-11%)
- 66% of the 3,116 reports related to children and young people, whilst 34% related to adults.
- There were 370 fewer reports relating to children and young people signifying a -15% reduction in demand.
- The average time a person is missing is now 22.98 hours, which is down from 54.8 hours
- A 21% reduction of 'repeat' MFH reports, which is 264 fewer incidents than in 2018 (1,262).
- 734 recorded 'in care' reports, which is 178 fewer than 2018 (912) – equalling a -19.5% reduction.

Cost savings

[1]According to Home Office (2005) estimates, the cost of investigating a missing person is three times that of a robbery investigation and four times more than a burglary investigation. [2] For a 'medium risk' missing person without use of specialist resources the typical investigation time is 18 hours.

National statistics for the costing of an average investigation based on risk levels are: Low & Medium risk cases costs on average £2,500 and a High risk case £8,500.

Taking the figure of £2,500 as a base figure and using this in line with the reduction of 371 'total missing reports' we can see that the MFH team have in effect saved Nottinghamshire Police £927,500 or 6,678 hours' worth of front line officer investigation.

The reasons for these reductions are multi-faceted and contributing factors detailed below are attributed to the success of the MFH team:

- The overall reduction in figures suggests a general trend downwards, which has been evident since Nottinghamshire established the MFH team in 2014.

- Having a bespoke and specialist MFH team which comprises 'Locate' and 'Safeguarding' elements has meant the development of expertise within the team, and close working relationships between the team and other departments and partner agencies. This has created a 'holistic' approach to missing people which has driven the general trend downwards.

- Reduction in missing reports on COMPACT due to the training provided to Contact Management Sgt's and control room staff by the MFH team. This has resulted in better decision making by the control room on what is a missing person and what is a 'missing no apparent risk'.

- Co-location with the Mental Health Street Triage Team has resulted in numerous cases being closed as deliberate absences after consultation with the triage team.

- Once on COMPACT, the fall in average time missing is due to a strong approach in the MFH team and close working relationships with colleagues on division which ensure enquires are conducted in a timely manner.

- The timely and appropriate use of technological investigation methods is a further contributory factor in ensuring expedited MFH enquiries are completed.

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[1] Greene,K.. and Pakes, F. (2012). Establishing the cost of missing person's investigation.

[2] Greene, K. and Pakes, F. (2013). The cost of missing person investigations: implications for current debates. p. 5.

The use of social media to communicate with missing people and their associates is a good example of this.

- Centralisation of the department at FHQ and close location to specialist search advisers (PolSA) means that expert advice and proactive MFH briefings can take place at the earliest opportunity for the high risk search investigations.

- Reports for children and young people (under 18 years) are down due to effective and on-going education of care placements in relation to reporting protocols and their responsibilities in safeguarding and locating the people they care for. The MFH Safeguarding Team actively challenge poor reporting and work with the managers of such homes to educate staff and robustly apply appropriate care and reporting plans.

- The introduction of the Herbert Protocol has meant a reduction in time missing for vulnerable dementia sufferers.

- Some of our high risk and repeat missing persons have been quickly located and robustly safeguarded by Nottinghamshire Police through the use of police protection and a very strong approach from the MFH team. This has resulted in some repeat missing persons being moved out of county.

The key to achieving these significant demand reductions is by having a robust approach to missing persons.

4.3 There are numerous stages of risk assessment when dealing with a missing person.

The first of these assessments occurs when the incident is called in to the control room. The call handlers have a pro forma consisting of 24 questions to gather information and assess risk. A supervisor within the control room completes a THRIVE assessment which assesses threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability, and engagement requirements which identifies the initial risk level and dictates the police response. If the decision is made for the incident to remain as 'missing - no apparent risk' then the control room manages this work within their department in accordance with policy guidelines, up to the point the incident is closed or an officer is dispatched.

For missing incidents with an apparent risk (low, medium or high) officers are then dispatched to the incident. Officers use the information from the incident log, information gathered at the scene, and that which is held on policing systems. The officer completes a risk assessment on the COMPACT missing person's management system, which is assigned to a Demand Management Inspector (DMI) who assesses the information and ratifies, or alters, the assessed risk level. Force policy has been amended to direct that these risk assessments are signed off by an Inspector within two hours of them being submitted by the attending officer.

The MFH team conducts dip testing to ensure compliance. On a daily basis the MFH team assess all current missing persons on the COMPACT system and discuss these with the DMI at daily management meetings. Area sergeants and the MFH team conduct written reviews on all missing cases during each tour of duty, highlighting any change of circumstances that would direct a change in risk level. Where a case is assessed as high risk the reviewing officer will be a Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) who will review the case and set the investigation plan. Force policy dictates that missing person cases will have written reviews at 24 hours, 72 hours and 7 days. However, the reviewing Inspector or DCI can make a decision to have additional reviews set in line with the risks.

4.4 The MFH team have worked to develop their force and inter-agency response by implementing a number of measures.

- A monthly multi agency meeting known as the 'Multiple Missing and Hotspot Meeting' is held with stakeholders to discuss the most frequent and vulnerable missing people. This acts as a scrutiny panel and sits above multi agency meetings to ensure all safeguarding actions have been identified and implemented in a timely manner. This meeting is now attended by the force's vulnerability officer who provides greater scope to safeguard those as identified as being most at risk.

- A joint safeguarding board policy was completed and signed off with key internal and external stakeholders in May 2018. This lists each agencies individual and joint responsibilities with regards to the safeguarding of children reported missing.

- Partners from social care, charities and the health service have worked together to raise awareness of vulnerable adults who go, or may go missing. As a result, a scheme has been implemented which provides a more effective and efficient response to this group of people, in line with the golden hour principles.

- Our Missing Person Coordinators proactively seek to reduce future vulnerability by attending multi agency meetings for persistent and vulnerable missing people. Within these partnership meetings, pertinent information is shared with partner agencies and action plans are developed to reduce future missing episodes and to safeguard the individual.

- The MFH team work closely with social care for live missing cases in order to have a joined up approach to safeguarding the individual. We aim to keep open channels of communication flowing throughout the investigation ensuring that each agency is central to the process, whilst challenging poor practice where required.

- The COMPACT missing person recording system is set up to automatically notify social care when a person has been reported missing. They are then sent information when the person is located and a summary of the circumstances surrounding their location and a copy of the police prevention interview (G2109) which enhances information sharing processes. The local authority then

conduct their own return interview, in instances where a child has been missing, and any information that needs to be reported to police, is shared.

- The recent successful ADA proposal culminated in the recruitment of two additional officers increasing the capacity of the team from four to six officers. This allows them to reduce the demand on frontline resources whilst providing a consistent and robust approach to missing investigations seven days a week. The team is led by a full-time safeguarding sergeant, thus increasing the team's capacity and safeguarding oversight.

- In May 2019 the Missing from Home team co-located at FHQ. This has allowed better continuity in investigations and safeguarding, enhancing the 'one team' ethos. Centralising the team has afforded resilience that now enables consistent and effective community enquiries across the entire Force area.

- As of October 2019, the Mental Health Street Triage Team have co-located to FHQ and work closely alongside the missing team and provide us with real time information, advice and support, in line with our enquiries.

- We continue to work very closely with dedicated teams linked to Modern Slavery, County Lines, SEIU and Child Abuse to share information and learn about emerging trends that could impact our area of business.

- We seek to stay at the forefront of technological advances that could aid the investigations of missing people for example; contacting missing persons via social media applications and data extraction. This information, along with information from the wider investigation, is used to form part of a trigger plan, which are regularly reviewed.

  Officers continually seek telecommunications and social media data to locate missing persons and obtain details of who has been in contact. This information is used to safeguard the missing person or notify partners of inappropriate contacts / associates. In 2018, the missing team completed 379 'CyComms' / SPOC applications; we consider this a vital part of safeguarding whilst the person is missing. This information forms part of the requests to issue child abduction warning notices, and can be shared with other departments as necessary.

- Regular training is developed by the MFH team and delivered in force, raising awareness of missing from home processes and policies to ensure a streamlined approach from the force.

- MFH team members attend both regional and national forums in order to represent the force, to share and learn best practice.

- Force policy and guidance documents are sent to Sergeants to brief front line officers and neighbourhood teams in order to raise awareness of missing processes and any associated risks.

- The COMPACT missing person system is a valued source of intelligence. All relevant departments are briefed to effectively search and extract information from this system.

- We have recruited a LAC (Looked After Children) officer for the county in addition to the city area, which will provide resilience and a more robust response to safeguarding young people within residential children's homes.

The MFH team continue to develop and learn from own force and other forces investigations

- Missing person investigations are transferred in and out of Force in line with national guidance, which dictates that the Force with the best chance of locating the missing person should own the investigation. Learning from forces is shared resulting in our systems being updated, enabling us to compare investigative practices and as a result learn possible adaptations that we could make to improve our own practices.

- The MFH team receive monthly regional digital learning bulletins. These highlight round-ups of examples of IOPC investigations. From these we continue to learn from the work of others and seek to improve our professional practices by integrating these lessons into our daily business.

- The MFH team have noted from experience that there is no standardised process in which information is transferred between forces when a vulnerable child or adult, with a missing history, is moved between counties and force areas. As a result of this we proactively seek to gain information around their risk and vulnerabilities, from partner agencies. From this information we develop a trigger plan to safeguard the person from the earliest opportunity and ensure officers have the information to hand to assist them with accurate risk assessments. If a Nottinghamshire child is re-located outside of our county borders we provide the hosting force with a detailed handover.

| 5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision |

5.1   None

| 6. Human Resources Implications |

6.1   None

| 7. Equality Implications |

7.1   None

8. Risk Management

8.1 None

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 in the final stages of being updated and we are at the sign off stage. This should be completed by the end of October 2019. 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. None