



MISSING PERSONS

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that cases of missing persons are investigated effectively, and are supported by appropriate management structures. When a person is reported missing the police's primary responsibility is to protect those at risk of harm, minimise distress and provide a high quality service to the families and carers of missing people; prosecuting those who cause harm or pose a risk of harm. West Midlands Police (WMP) is committed to ensuring that officers and staff take appropriate and proportionate action to deal with people who are reported missing.

Authorised Professional Practice (APP):

(*delete as appropriate)

- This policy has been checked against APP. West Midlands Police has adopted the APP provisions, with supplementary information contained herein, which reflects local practice and the needs of the communities served by West Midlands Police.

Those provisions are shown in the links below and can be accessed via the home page of the APP website

[Missing Persons](#)

[Missing Persons Investigations](#)

Policy Statements:

- **The following policy statements are in addition to the adopted provisions of APP, APP must be read in conjunction with this policy.**
- This policy, the associated procedural guidance and APP define how missing persons investigations will be conducted and how risk is assessed and managed.
- This policy, the associated procedural guidance and APP must be applied for all reports of missing persons.
- Associated Procedural Guidance Documents:
 - [Process Map](#)
 - COMPACT- Misper System
 - Call Handling & Initial Risk Assessment
 - Investigations
 - Transfer & Cross Border Investigations
 - Return, Intervention & Prevention
 - Multi-Agency Triage Process
- Cross Border Investigations National Form Template
- WMP's response is focused on multi-agency working and preventing people from going missing.
- It is important to understand the reasons why individuals go missing. A greater understanding will enable more effective prevention strategies to be implemented

- The [Missing Persons Process Map](#) has been agreed by Force Contact, Force Response and the Locate team to assist staff in understanding procedures.
- WMP utilises the COMPACT- Misper System.
For more information on COMPACT – Misper, please see attached procedural guidance.
- WMP operates a fundamentally different system and process from that envisaged in the missing APP.
- In WMP, unlike in APP, investigations are clearly defined into separate departments, each with responsibility for their section of the missing investigation process.

RISK & RISK ASSESSMENT

- [Definition of Missing & Risk Continuum – APP](#)

RISK ASSESSMENT & RESPONSE

- [Risk Assessment & Response – APP](#)
- WMP uses [THRIVE](#) as a risk assessment tool. This must be applied in respect of all reports of missing persons.
- Risk assessment for missing persons must be guided by the:
 - [Risk principles APP](#)
 - [National Decision Model \(NDM\)](#)
 - [Missing persons decision-making guide \(2009\)](#).
 - [THRIVE](#)
- A risk assessment decision will always be subjective and is informed by professional judgement.
- Risk assessments must always be checked as part of the supervisory process.

JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

[Joint Responsibility – APP](#)

- The above APP should not be used to justify not commencing a missing persons investigation.
- The APP sets out a principle of expectation and WMP have a duty to act when that expectation is not met.

WMP LOCATE MISSING PERSONS TEAM (Locate)

- [The 'Locate' Missing Persons Team](#) deals exclusively with the investigation of missing person matters. They are responsible for the secondary investigation within the missing continuum.
- The Locate Team is owned by the WMP Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID).
- The Locate Team work 20 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

- Locate also provides expertise and support to all other Departments throughout the whole missing investigation process where they have primacy.
i.e. Support of Force Response with telecommunications, media and search strategy during the primary investigation phase of High risk missing person's investigations.
- Unlike the APP model, which identifies that it may be proportionate to include a detective in some investigations, Locate is intrinsically a FCID function.
- Therefore Locate is managed and operated by appropriately trained Officers within a core CID management and ownership structure.
- In a divergence from the APP approach, Locate's management of investigations extends to the risk and review process.
- In practice this means that Departmental, FCID detective managers of ascending ranks review all investigations, including those of significant risk and length.

NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES AND CHARITIES

[National Support Services & Charities – APP](#)

DATA INTEGRITY AND HOCR PRINCIPLES

- The principles of Home Office crime recording are defined by WMP as;
 - Ensure that victims of crime receive the service they expect and deserve;
 - Prioritise effective investigation of crime in keeping with national standards and the [College of Policing's Code of Ethics](#);
 - Inform the public of the scale, scope and risk of crime in their local communities;
 - Allow PCCs, Forces and local partners to build intelligence on crime and criminal behaviour necessary for an efficient and effective response;
 - Enable Government, PCCs, Forces and their partners to understand the extent of demands made on them and the associated costs of service delivery; and
 - Inform the development of Government policy to reduce crime and to establish whether those policies are effective. The importance of these objectives, and in particular the need for the public and victims of crime to have confidence in the police response when they report a crime, makes it imperative that crimes are recorded consistently and accurately.
- All missing person investigations will give regard to Crime Data Integrity (CDI) and the principles of Home Office Crime Recording (HOCR).
- Where a crime is identified it will be recorded and investigated in line with the principles set out and relevant force policies.

Definitions/Acronyms:

MISSING

- Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed

FOUND

- When a person's whereabouts are KNOWN and they are appropriately safeguarded they may be deemed as found.

PRIMARY INVESTIGATION

- Primary investigation may be defined as: the initial steps taken by West Midlands Police in an endeavour to locate, safeguard and record a missing investigation.

SECONDARY INVESTIGATION

- Secondary investigation is the term given to the entire process undertaken subsequent to the primary missing investigation

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- Any incident in which the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the subject, their family and/or the community should be designated as a Critical incident.

ACRONYMS:

APP	Authorised Professional Practice
AWOL	Absent without leave
CAWN	Child Abduction Warning Notice
CDI	Crime Data Integrity
DI	Detective Inspector
DIDP	Detective Inspector Development Programme
DS	Detective Sergeant
DSI	Death or serious injury
FCID	Force Criminal Investigations Department
FIB	Force Intelligence Bureau
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HBA	Honour Based Abuse
HOCR	Home Office Counting Rules
I and P	Intervention and Prevention
IIO	Initial Investigating Officer
IMS	Intelligence Management System
IOPC	Independent Office for Police Conduct
ILO	Intelligence Liaison Officer
IPA	Individual Placement Assessment
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Childre
LTDB	Local Tasking Delivery Board
MOG	Missing Operational Group
NBTC	National Border Targeting Centre
NPAS	National Police Air Service
NPU	Neighbourhood Policing Unit
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PIP	Professionalising Investigation Programme
PNC	Police National Computer
PND	Police National Database



POLSA	Police Search Advisor
PSD	Professional Standards Department
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
SIODP	Senior Investigating Officer Development Programme
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TRM	Threat and Risk Meeting
UKICB	UK International Crime Bureau for INTERPOL
WMP	West Midlands Police

Procedural Guidance Documents List:

- Process Map
- Compact-Misper System
- Call Handling & Initial Risk Assessment
- Investigations
- Transfer & Cross Border Investigations
- Return, Intervention & Prevention
- Multi-Agency Triage Process
- Cross Border Investigation National Form Template

Publication Instructions:

- Redacted version required for publication to public.
Telephone numbers and email addresses should be redacted before publication to the public particularly:
 - Procedural Guidance-Investigations Page 3 –national ports phone number and Page 10 – PSD email address
 - Cross border transfer form-Page 3 – force control room email address

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Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the policy contact shown above.



Force Executive Approval:

CHIEF CONSTABLE

Monitoring and Review

Version	Date Reviewed	No change / Minor Changes / Major Changes (<i>detail</i>)	Amended / Agreed by	New review date