



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



Responding to High Risk Incidents Missing Persons

Objectives:

1. **State** the CoP definition of 'missing'
2. **State** the risk gradings of missing persons
3. **Specify** the considerations when responding to missing person incidents
4. **Explain** the importance of missing person return/debrief interviews

Missing Persons

What is a Missing Person?

College of Policing Definition:

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



QTS

What do you think the definition of a missing person is?

The investigation of a missing person begins at the point of first notification to the police

Prompt and thorough actions by the police can provide a positive contribution to community confidence

Missing persons cases often receive high levels of media coverage.

This is especially true when children are reported missing.

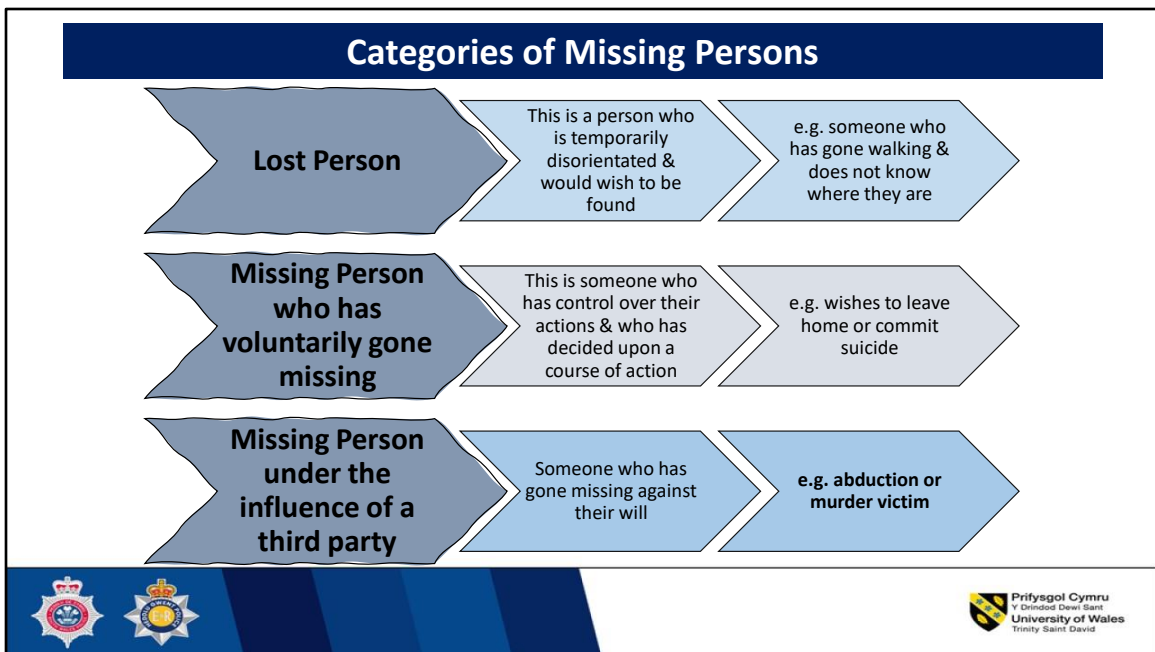
The initial approach of officers attending may have great impact on the case.

No two cases are ever the same.

A failure to investigate a report of a missing person properly may lead to:

- individuals being put at risk

- the loss of opportunities to reduce potential harm
- the force being vulnerable to a legal challenge under either the Human Rights Act 1998 or the civil law relating to negligence
- reputational damage for the force



QTS – how could a person go missing? Discuss student responses

Reveal slide discussing each point – asking students for example of each category.

QTS – What do you consider to be a voluntary missing person?

Some examples of voluntary MISPEERS

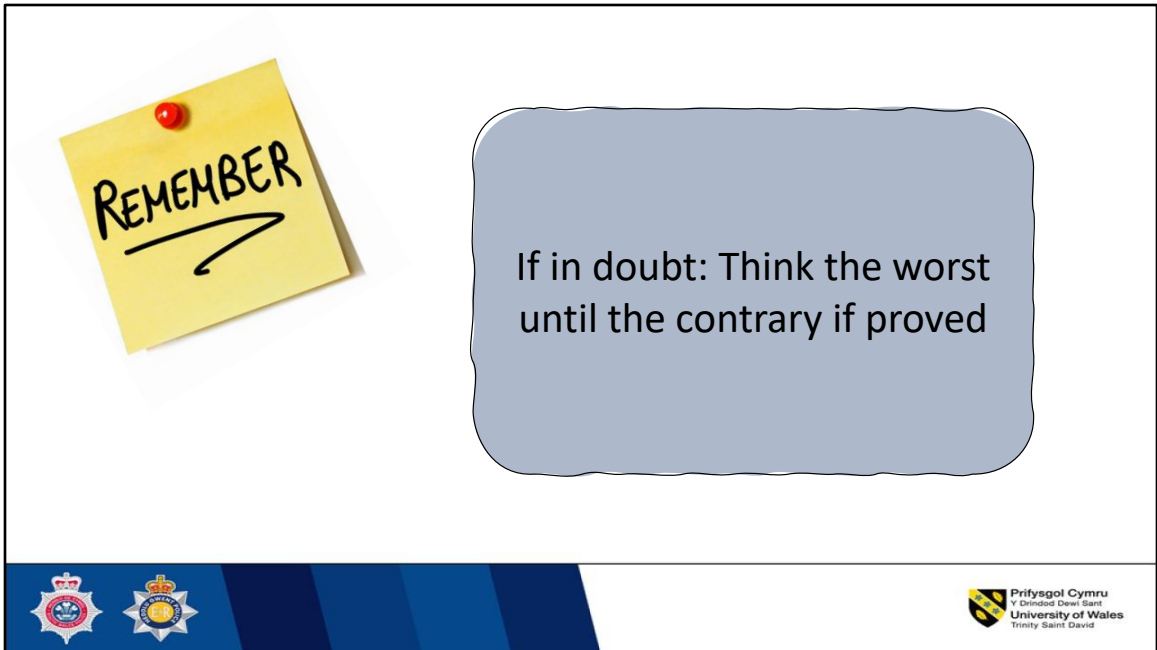
Leave a partner
 Escape Parental Control
 Avoid Paying Debts
 Seek A Different Life Style
 Wander (Children)
 Escape Arrest Or Investigation
 Suicide

QTS – What do you consider to be an involuntary missing person?

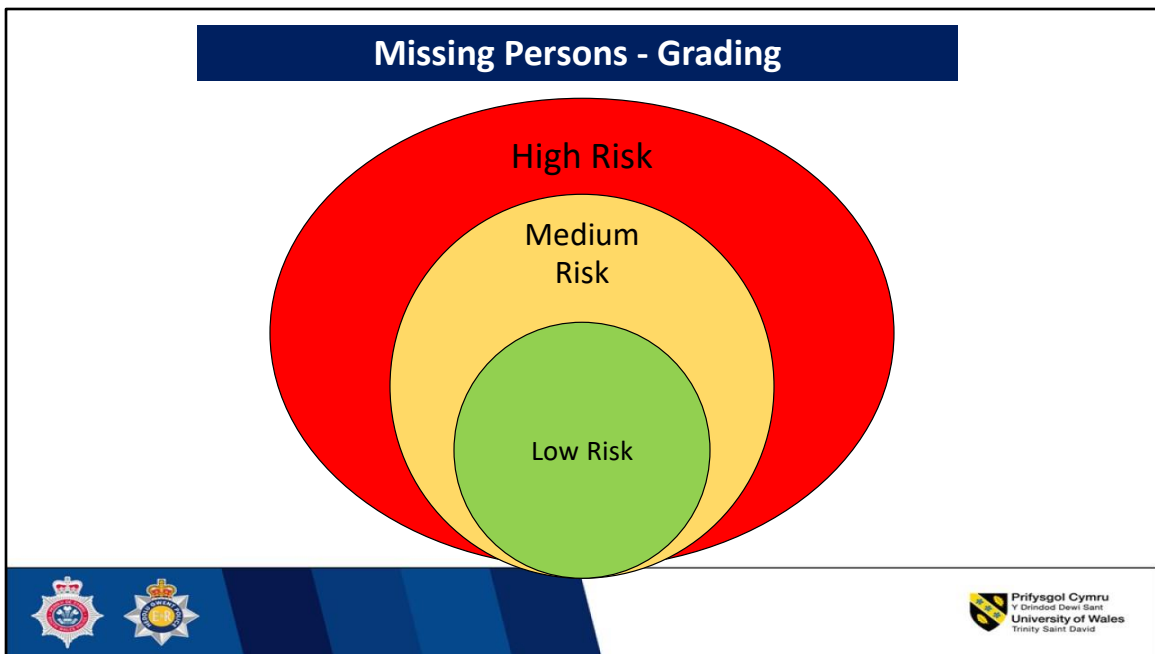
Some examples of involuntary MISPEERS

Crimes Such As Murder
 Assault

Child Abduction
Loss Of Memory
Mental Illness
Physical Illness
Accident Or Sudden Death



NPCC Guidance is that reports of missing persons should be seen as an investigation from the outset



The PSC (FCR for Gwent) call handler will make the initial risk assessment and determine the level of response, a secondary risk assessment must be carried out by the first officer on the scene.

The risk assessment will result in a classification of Low, Medium or High risk.

QTS - What do you think is meant by low, medium or high risk MISPERs?

QTS – What do you consider to be low, medium or high risk?

The definition of each of these categories is as follows:

- **Low risk:** there is no apparent threat of danger to either the subject or the public. A young person under the age of 18 should not be categorised as low risk.
- SWP now have a new procedure. The Low Risk

Category can now be used for Children aged 14-17 years subject of a robust risk assessment by the PPSD MPIT and ratification from a Patrol Inspector.

- **Medium risk:** the risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.
- **High risk:** the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the subject is in danger through their own vulnerability; or they 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.

****SWP Policy ONLY****

Gwent Police do not use the NAIRA Category

There is a further category for missing persons:

No Apparent Immediate Risk (Absent) - NAIRA

There is no apparent immediate risk of harm to either the subject or the public

Actions to locate the subject and/or gather further information should be agreed with the informant and a latest review time set to reassess the risk.

Children (13 and under) – All children under 13 will be considered to be at least Medium Risk if their whereabouts are unknown and cannot be established.

Children (14 to 17) / NAIRA CATEGORY – Since 30/11/20 SWP have allowed for children in this age bracket to be classified as No Apparent Immediate Risk (Absent) or 'NAIRA'. This category may only be used in cases where the circumstances of the missing incident, together with the known information regarding the child's background, suggest there is no apparent immediate risk to their

safety. In 'NAIRA' cases, further actions to locate the subject should be agreed with the reporting person/care provider. These cases will be risk assessed and overseen by specialist police officers based within the Public Service Centre.

Missing Persons - Grading

The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.

A young person under the age of 18 should not be categorised as low risk. *SWP differs slightly*****

Low risk



Low risk

The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.

Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm.

*****SWP Policy differs slightly in that all children between the ages of 14 and 17 years inclusive can be considered in any of the risk categories so long as a robust assessment of risk has been completed, rationalised, endorsed within the NICHE Missing Person Report*****

Children aged 13 years and under cannot be classed as low risk

Missing Persons - Grading

The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.

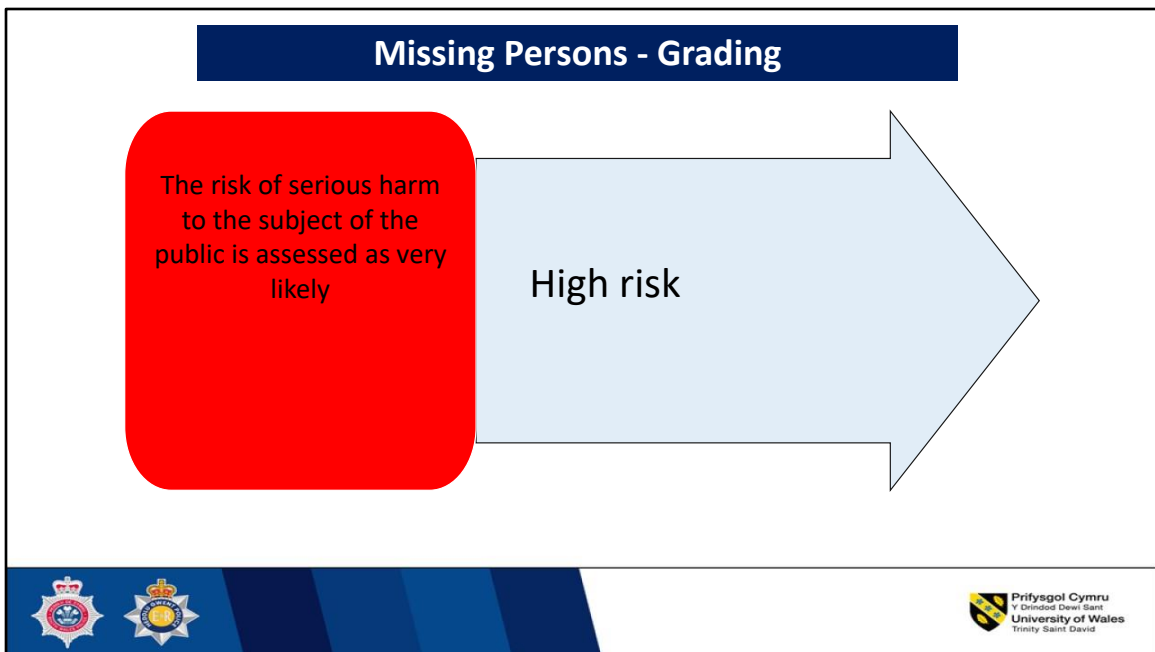
Medium risk



Medium risk

Any child under the age of 18 or any adult

The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious. This category requires an active and measured response by the police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting.



High risk

Any child under the age of 18 or any adult

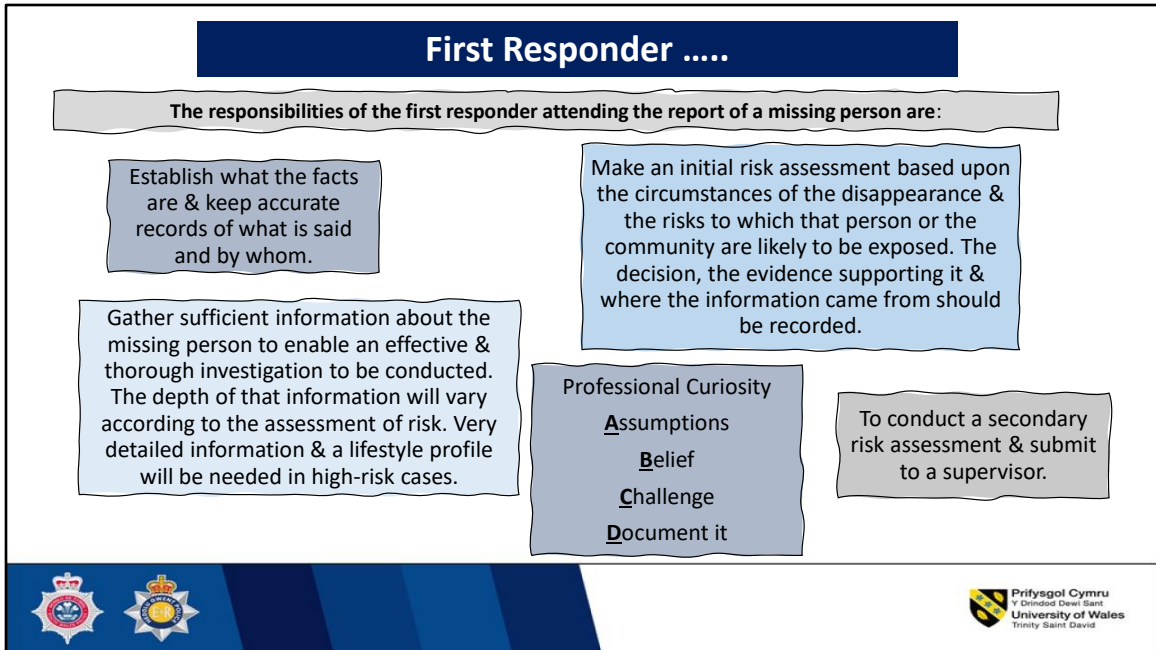
The risk of **serious harm** to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely. This category almost always requires the immediate deployment of police resources – action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness. A member of the senior management team must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an investigating officer (IO) and possibly an SIO, and a police search adviser (PoISA). There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate. The MPB should be notified of the case without undue delay. Children's services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.

Risk of serious harm has been defined as (Home Office 2002 and OASys 2006):

'A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which

recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible.'

Trainer to direct students to their own Force Misper policy as procedures differ between forces. These are on Moodle



QTS - What responsibilities do you think you have as a first responder?

Board blast and discuss student answers

The responsibilities of the first responder attending the report of a missing person are:

- **Carry out a thorough search of the missing persons home address and/or the address they went missing from** – including outbuildings, loft space and surrounding area. You should ensure that a thorough 'open door' search is made of the premises; this will enable you to gather evidence relating to their disappearance, gather intelligence which may lead to their discovery or locate the missing person. Consider any preparations made to leave –
 - Are clothes missing?
 - Passport?
 - Bank cards?
 - Diary
 - Any note/letter left (suicide note for example)
- Make all immediate relevant enquiries in order to locate the missing person – obtain recent photograph, H2H, CCTV enquiries, obtain mobile number, social media

details. Does the misper have access to a vehicle – if so what are the vehicle details.

- Consider obtaining any physical evidence of identity such as recent photographs, fingerprints, DNA samples.
- Identify the person who is the point of contact for the police and assess levels of support required.
- Gather the relevant information to allow the Missing Person report to be fully completed with relevant information. Where it is not considered necessary to take all the details, comments should be included about this to ensure clarity about why they have not been recorded.
- To identify and secure any potential crime scene.

As the first responder to a missing person you will complete a missing persons form via Niche – the details of this form will be covered during niche course. There are also a number of MISPER action plans/template on the OEL of Misper Niche occurrence – these will give you a guide/aide memoir of what you need to cover as the first officer at the report of a missing person.

Professional curiosity is the capacity to utilise communication skills to explore and challenge assumptions and understand the potentially complex dynamics of a situation, rather than taking it at face value. Officers and staff should utilise a wide range of sources to gather information relating to the missing person to identify potential risks and understand what is or may be happening in an individual's life.

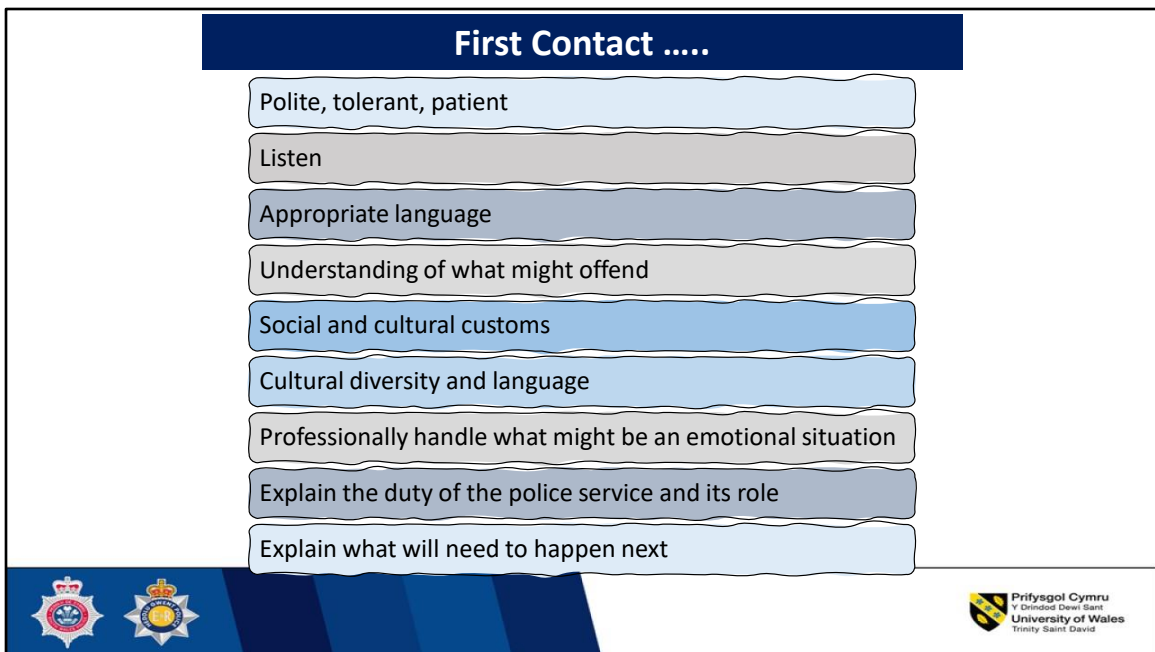
Assumptions - Should not be used to mitigate risk or the need to undertake further enquiries.

Belief - Should not be used in place of seeking proof to mitigate risk.

Challenge - Checks should be made to corroborate information or accounts.

Document it - Appropriately record your actions and rationale to support future scrutiny.

Be nosey, ask questions ,research NICHE- associates ,flags and markers ,person dossiers, recent missing reports- you can use the BI Tool to help with this dynamically, look at the most recent incidents/occurrences which may contain details of a new associate that hasn't been linked to them on NICHE.



Activity 1 –

What contact would you suggest?

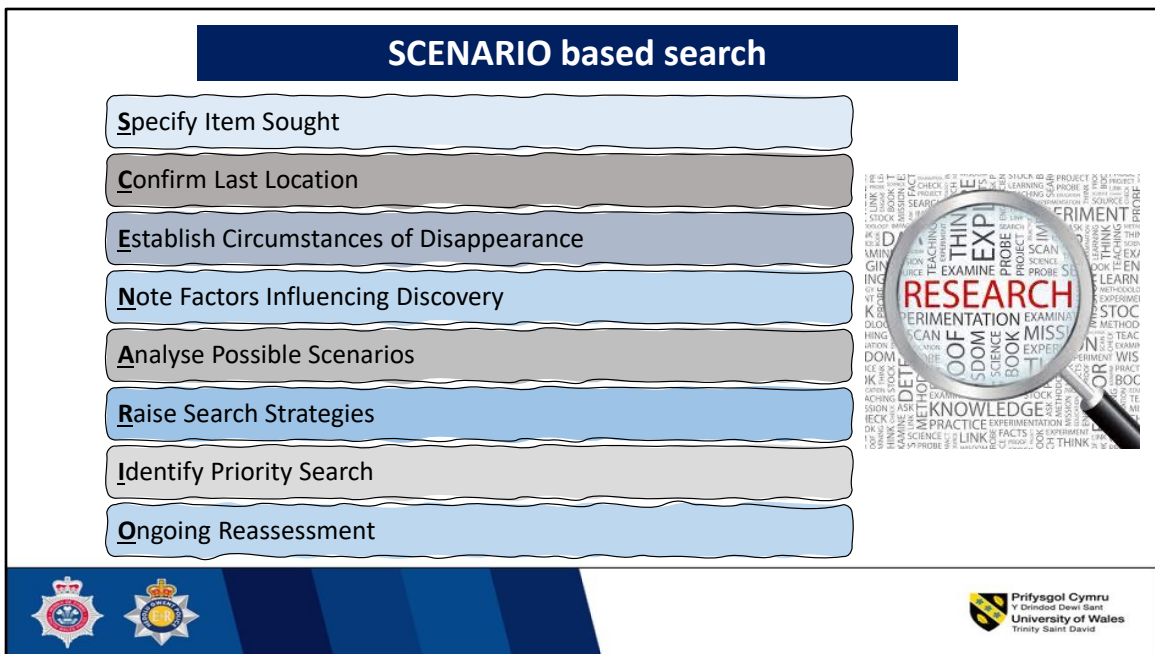
What questions would you ask?

List is not exhaustive, the idea is to stimulate discussion around how the officer attending has to balance the circumstances they find with the need to be thorough and professional.

The investigation into a missing person begins at the point of first notification to the police. As a first responder you will play a crucial role in shaping the subsequent pace and the extent of the police investigation. It is important to remember that the act of going missing could be a possible indicator of other issues or problems in the person's life. It could be related to their own personal circumstances or something more sinister, it is only by thorough investigation that you can uncover these circumstances. One of the primary facts to be determined is why the person has gone missing.

The ACPO Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2010 states 'whether they have been identified as being high, medium or low

risk, positive action is required at every stage of the investigation, **if in doubt, think murder**. By doing so you will ensure that all valuable investigative opportunities are covered.



Searching for mispers -

- **Specify Item Sought.** In this case it is the misper but may include clothing and other items that could assist in locating the missing person.
- **Confirm Last Location.** This is the Place Last Seen (PLS) or the Last Known Position (LKP) should be used as the point to begin the initial search.
- **Establish Circumstances of Disappearance.** This stage examines the circumstances of the loss, considering why and how the disappearance occurred. All facts, no matter how trivial they might appear to be, should be considered as it is at this stage that the most successful clues to resolving a search are often found.
- **Note Factors Influencing Discovery.**
The whole range of factors that may influence discovery of the missing person should be considered. This may include: what is the capability of the person who has gone missing? How is the person dressed and equipped? How populated is the area? What are the regular

activities of people in this area? What is the terrain like? What is the weather like, both current and forecast? When does it get dark? Does the missing person have access to transport, money, telephones? In missing person cases, friends and families may wish to involve themselves.

- **Analyse Possible Scenarios.** This is the 'what happened' phase and must include identification of all likely scenarios from the previous four stages. It will involve assessment of any relevant information and intelligence. This is particularly relevant in high risk/complex search operations.
- **Raise Search Strategies.** A search strategy should be planned for the most likely scenarios, identifying boundary limitations and search areas, including any possible routes.
- **Identify Priority Search.** The knowledge gained from previous stages should be used to identify the best scenario. Each scenario must be considered to identify the most likely option. It is possible that scenarios and priorities will change as new information becomes available. Where resources permit, multiple scenarios can be searched. Where this is not the case, priority must be given to the most likely option.
- **Ongoing Reassessment.** The whole process must be constantly reassessed to ensure the appropriate use of available resources, and that the best scenario is being pursued. When reassessing the scenario, any new information arising from the investigation must be considered. It may also be necessary to review the search strategy, which should be carried out by a supervisor and/or PolSA, particularly where expected results are not forthcoming.

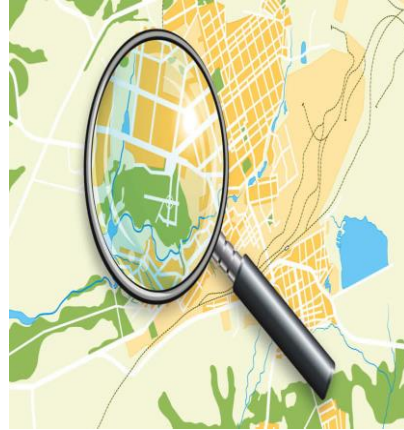
Importance of Searching

Most missing children are found very quickly by a competent and thorough search

Missing children provoke many reactions

Police have a responsibility to provide leadership

Some cases have resulted in the death of the missing child



QTS – Why do you think we need to search?

Home address search

Garden and outbuildings

Immediate surrounding area

Roads, Footpaths and tracks immediate area and leading to the shops

How to you explain the need to search the house? This is to look for the person but also to pick up any clues, notes, medication taken or not taken, -it also helps to look in wardrobes to ascertain the clothing taken and any other preparations.

The minimum search is the open door search and **SEARCH DON'T JUST HAVE A LOOK**

This is a large area for one person to search and you may need to quickly conduct an initial visual check followed by a more thorough search. Remember to look under, up, behind and into objects, buildings, ditches etc

It is worth reinforcing here accurate record keeping-

document where you have searched and where you haven't searched i.e. you couldn't gain access to a particular room , cupboard, outbuilding, car, attic etc. As well as updates of Negative are never acceptable – what does negative mean ? i.e H2H negative ? no reply ,or occupier spoken to and doesn't know the misper or does know the misper but last saw them a month ago-who with and where.

Technology & Specialist Options for Misper Investigations



NPAS



Drone Team



Mobile phone



Search Teams



Social Media & Open Source



ANPR & CCTV



QTS – What technology and specialist options do we have available to assist us in Misper investigations?

1 – NPAS – National Police Air Service covers all of the UK and offers air assets to each force at a cost. It is not a SWP or Gwent resource and any request has to be made by officers and confirmed by the Bronze Inspector or the FIM. It costs approx. £3200 per a call out and therefore is not a tick box exercise but there has to be clear instructions as to what is required to be searched. It has limitations of not being able to see into dense woodland or buildings but can cover a huge area during its deployment. It has infrared camera's for heat source detection as well as an extremely powerful search light.

2- Drone Team – SWP and Gwent Police have access to drones. Improvement in technology has led to dedicated units within the forces which can offer its services between certain times for Misper enquiries. It has a more localised use than NPAS having a range of 500m and a ceiling height of 120m so needs a specific search area. The drone team though does have many batteries however so can deploy for 2+ hours if required and multiple search areas are identified. It can be flown day and night due to infrared camera's (Heat source) but cannot penetrate dense bushes or

inside buildings.

3- Mobile Phone – Many HR mispers have a mobile phone with them which can be helpful for many reasons. They can be contacted by officers, text by the PSC/FCR with a read receipt and a trained operator or engage with a force negotiator. To track a mobile phone signal and see the recent contacts it has communicated with there has to be an immediate risk to the missing person. It has a cost element and needs to be authorised by a GOLD commander on duty in the force due to interfering with a persons right to a private life. Due to this basic enquiries are required to be completed prior to applying for this tactic. The limitations of tracking this way is that it can give a large search radius that may not help investigators. If you think the person is the vicinity then this will not be the best tactic however if you believe they may be travelling further afield then it can give a considerable boost to the investigation.

Cell site mapping is best read by a POLSA.

Don't forget that many apps such as Snapchat or Find my Iphone can be used so look to see if these are relevant and ask friends/family to assist if applicable to the scenario

4- Search teams – Operation New York is a term used to ask for all units in that area to offer support to find persons. If support is required later on in an investigation and a specific search area has been identified then requesting a search team could be an option. This is a team of trained search officers who work in larger teams who can clear area's quicker and give a higher certainty that a missing person is not present. A POLSA gives advice to this team and will often have reviewed the high risk missing person to give specific search area's.

5 – Social media and Open source – Open source enquiries is a term for trained officers in the PSC to research social media of the subject to find out information which could lead to them being found. Depending on the security settings of the missing persons accounts depends on how much information can be obtained. These enquiries though can lead to identifying area's of interest, Recent communications and friends or associates.

6 – ANPR and CCTV – Automatic Number Plate Recognition are camera's fitted on the road networks. They obtain photographs of vehicles that pass scanning the number plate. If a missing person has access to a vehicle or leaves in a vehicle then this can be searched for to give a direction of travel or in combination with other information a location of interest. Finding the car is the best enquiry to assist in locating the missing person quickly. It can also be used in a short term historical format to look at travel history which may benefit information gathering about the missing persons habits or can be added to a hotlist which will mean it will set off an alarm if it passes a camera.

All this can be requested through PSC.

This is not a definitive list but is the most common of investigative options open to offer support. After initial enquiries have gathered the necessary information/intelligence then it may become apparent that 1 or multiple of the above may be beneficial or crucial to locate the missing person.

7. For SWP – BCU MPIT's and Missing Person Coordinators. They can provide advice and guidance and some members of the teams are trained to undertake open source and comm's work.



Tia Sharp



Trainer to explain that they are going to read a short news clip over slides 15 -16 on the **'Tia Sharp murder.'**

Tia Sharp: Met Police admit body search error

11 August 2012

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Police have blamed "human error" for the failure to find a body in Tia Sharp's grandmother's house.

Tia was reported missing on 3 August and a body was found at the house in New Addington, Croydon, on Friday after three previous unsuccessful searches.

Scotland Yard apologised to Tia's mother Natalie and said the body should have been found on Sunday.

Tia's grandmother Christine Sharp, 46, and her partner Stuart Hazell, 37, have been arrested on suspicion of murder.

A 39-year-old man has also been arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender.



Police hunting for Tia searched the home a total of four times



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Sniffer dog

The first search of the house took place on the day Tia went missing. Police said it was an "initial examination" of the home rather than a full search.

The second visit, on Sunday, took two hours and was carried out in the presence of the occupiers.

A police review has concluded human error during this examination was responsible for the failure to find the body.

Officers had searched the area where the body was eventually found without discovering anything.

The third visit, on Thursday, saw a sniffer dog deployed, again without finding a body.

It was only a full week after Tia was reported missing that police discovered the body during their fourth search on Friday.

Area Commander Neil Basu said: "An early review has been conducted and it is now clear that human error delayed the discovery of the body within the house.

"We have apologised to Tia's mother that our procedures did not lead to the discovery of the body on this [the second] search.

"A continuing review and examination of our search processes will be undertaken to ensure such a failing is not repeated."

BBC Home Affairs Correspondent Danny Shaw tweeted: "I can't ever remember a time when Met admitted a serious mistake so quickly and made immediate apology. But how did it happen?"

A post-mortem examination of the body has begun.



Christine Sharp and Stuart Hazell have been arrested on suspicion of murder

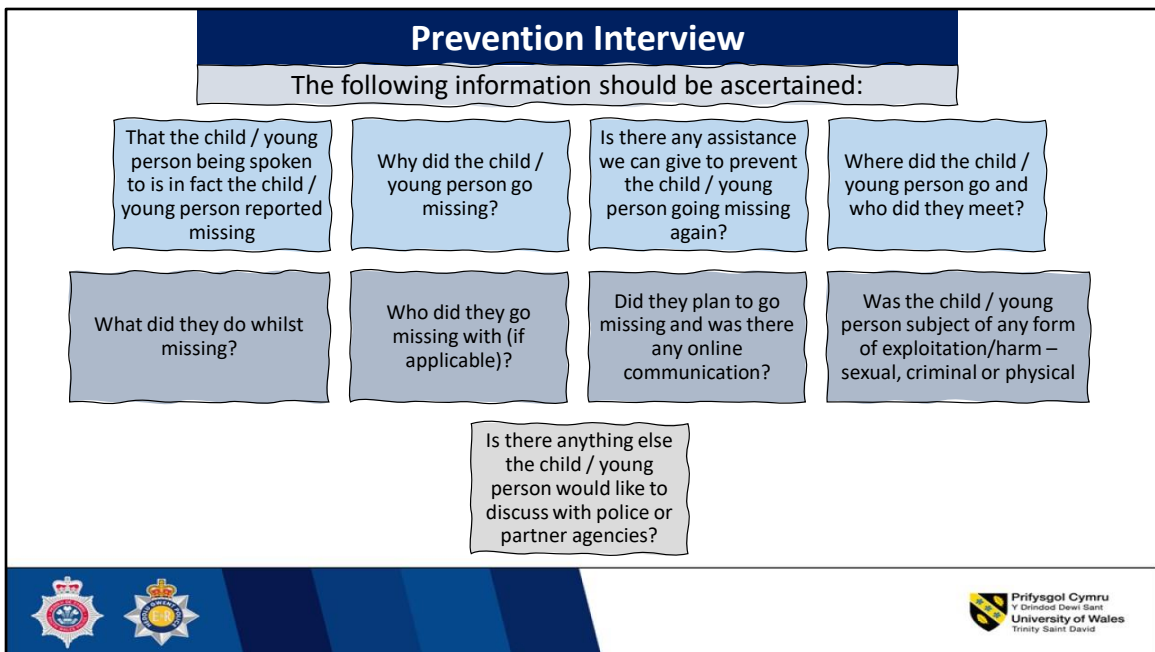


QTS What are your thoughts?

What impact does this have on:

- Family
- Police Service
- Public

Police failed to find body on two occasions



QTS – What questions would you ask on return of the person?

QTS – Where is this information recorded?

Management of the MisPer's return is a vital part of the investigation process. Effective management of a person's return

is important because the person:

- May have been the subject of crime or otherwise been at risk of harm
- May have gone missing in order to harm themselves or take their own life
- May have been unsafe or at risk owing to their inability to look after themselves properly due to age, incapacity or other reasons
- May have been the perpetrator of crime.

A well conducted prevention interview will provide vital intel and possible prevention opportunities

Prevention interviews and return home interviews

(RHI's) provide an important opportunity to identify ongoing information and risk factors that may affect the likelihood of the individual going missing again. They should NOT be treated as an administrative procedure simply to close a missing person investigation. Prevention Interviews These are conducted by police officers, as soon as

practicable, once the missing person has been located or returned home. They should be completed for both missing adults and children.

Officers are reminded that when a child (under 16) or young person (16-17 years) is located after being reported as missing they must be physically seen and a prevention interview conducted by a police officer. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for some other professional to carry out a more detailed prevention interview such as a teacher or social worker who may have built up a rapport with the subject.

This is not an exhaustive list. The purpose of these questions is to:

- Ensure that the subject was missing of their own accord and not by kidnap or abduction
- Ascertain whether there was any trigger event that precipitated the missing episode and which requires recording and investigation
- Gather intelligence to assist enquiries should there be a repeat missing episode
- Establish whether they were the victim of any crime whilst they were missing.

A missing person is under no obligation to answer these questions and under human rights legislation their privacy is protected. The purpose of these enquiries is to ensure the wellbeing of the subject.

Officers must record the details of the above conversation on Niche and bring the entry to the attention of a supervisor. If the interview is carried out by another professional they should be given guidance regarding the benefit of making a written record of what was said during the interview.

It is the duty of all officers to safeguard children. Where it is considered that a child remains at risk and is likely to suffer significant harm, officers should consider use of powers under s46 Children Act 1989. Immediate steps to secure and preserve evidence should also be taken at the earliest opportunity where offences are identified.

It is equally important that adults are also asked similar questions to children, and again, they are not obliged to answer any questions in relation to their reasons.

Consider the strapline adopted by the PPU – **What are they running from? What are they running to?**

PPU always consider **What are they running from? What are they running to? (Push-Pull factors)**. When dealing with MISPERs always consider those two questions. **Example:** A repeat MisPer was always returned to the Care Home from where they were missing. It was later identified that they kept running *from* the premises as Care Home staff were sexually abusing them.

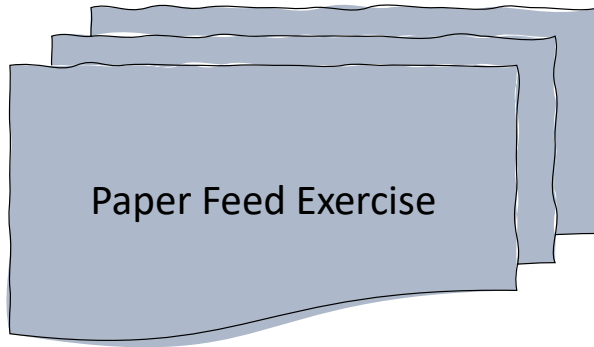
This is a SWP example from 4 years ago.

Are they running from a family set-up where they feel un-loved or not understood?

Voice of the child- be sensitive to the needs of the child. Try and get to the root cause of what they are running from or what they are running to. Give them time and space and don't be judgemental. Record their views and wishes and not only listen to them but 'see ' them – look for physical signs of trauma, withdrawal neglect etc. Be alert and remember the once chance rule or reachable moment .

We now refer to the return interview/debrief as a Prevention Interview in both forces. All forces should refer to what we used to refer to as safe and well check /return /debrief as a Prevention Interview. Return Home Interviews are normally completed by another agency or professional. In SWP its now NYAS Cymru and in Gwent it was Llamau.

Lets look at an example:



Paper feed exercise on Moodle – 6 stages. Groups of 3-5 dependant on class size.

Class discussion and debrief after each stage.

