1.0 Summary of Changes

This procedure has been amended within section 3.10.3 to include the Essex missing people toolkit and within 3.1.2 giving clarity around details transferred to the COMPACT system from the CID94.

2.0 What this Procedure is about

This procedure explains how Essex Police will respond to, record and investigate incidents of missing persons and applies to all officers, staff members, and special constables. Missing person enquiries may involve a serious crime, such as murder and all those involved in missing investigations should continually assess the possibility of escalation to a critical incident and, if required, take appropriate action, see D 0401 Procedure - Dealing with Critical Incidents. The purpose of the investigation is to identify the movements of the missing person in order to establish their current whereabouts and/or wellbeing.

The initial risk assessment, actions and recording of the incident may prove critical in achieving a successful outcome. A comprehensive audit trail is essential to aid the investigation and assist in future missing person investigations.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on:

- Missing Persons
- National Decision Model (NDM)
- Risk Principles
- Code of Ethics

This procedure does not apply to those circumstances where the location of a person is unknown and police involvement is not appropriate i.e. tracing a relative or friend. The informant should be directed to the relevant tracing agencies. They will not be dealt with by police as a missing person.

It is recognised that a person over 18 years with mental capacity may be absent through their own choice. Their right to privacy must be observed and details of their location not divulged. In addition it is important not to disclose the whereabouts of persons who are highlighted at risk of Honour Based Abuse (HBA), High Risk Domestic Abuse etc.

This procedure is illustrated by a Missing Persons Process Map.

For more information about this area of vulnerability please look at the Essex Police Vulnerability Knowledge Library.

*Compliance with this procedure and any governing policy is mandatory.*
3.0 Detail the Procedure

3.1 Investigation - An Overview

The College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) places all missing persons within a Continuum of risk ranging from ‘no apparent risk (absent)’ through to high risk cases that require immediate, intensive action.

3.1.1 Missing Persons (MPs)

The APP definition of a missing person is:

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

3.1.2 No Apparent Risk (Absent) – NAR(a)

The APP definition of No apparent risk (absent) is defined as:

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

*Persons under the age of 18 cannot be treated as ABSENT and must be treated MISSING PERSONS only.*

In addition Essex police will not grade a person under the age of 18 as Low Risk.

The following general principles are mandatory when dealing with missing/absent persons:

- The COMPACT system will be used to record all investigations;
- In many cases, officers/staff may complete a CID94 missing person booklet in the first instance. The detail of this is to be transferred to the COMPACT system as soon as practicable, or in any case within 3 hours. Once this form is completed, and the information transferred to the COMPACT system, the CID94 is to be handed to the relevant MPLO for the area, who will arrange for it’s retention/storage;
- High Risk cases will also be run on STORM during the beginning phase of enquiries (initial 12 hours);
- Responsibility for such investigations resides within the Local Policing Area (LPA) in which the person who is missing or absent resides;
- Consideration is to be given to using the Holmes fast track system for the investigation of High Risk missing person’s investigations which are considered to be complex and protracted.
Any decision to deviate from these principles must be endorsed by a Command Team member or an SIO in the case of transfers of missing investigations from COMPACT to Holmes. The rationale will be recorded on the Supervision / Handover task on COMPACT before being shown as inactive. The details of the OIC designated officer and manor of recording the on-going investigation must be shown on the front of the missing report using the ‘edit details’ facility.

### 3.2 COMPACT Risk Flags

Risk flags will be used as a tool to assist current and future risk assessments by maintaining up to date risk flags on nominal records within COMPACT assessments.

The COMPACT system has the ability to ‘Flag’ persons form the following list of COMPACT Risk Flags:

Appropriate risk flags will be attached to relevant COMPACT nominals if risks are identified around the above categories by:

- The Missing Person Performance & Review Officer (MPPRO);
- The Missing Person Liaison Officers (MPLO);
- Crime & Public Protection Command Operations Centre (C&PPC OC).

In addition to the above flags, those nominals identified as being at risk of CSE, or in the case of domestic abuse (DA), members of the acute victim’s cohort will have the following actions completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Completed by:</th>
<th>Where Recorded:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSE warning flags</td>
<td>MPLO and/or C&amp;PPC OC</td>
<td>PNC &amp; ATHENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting trigger plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA warning flags</td>
<td>Central Referral Unit (CRU) to request: MPLO and/or C&amp;PPC OC</td>
<td>PNC &amp; ATHENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting trigger plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actions above can be used to assist in the event of children at risk of CSE and adults at risk DA who go missing.

The flagging system also gives the ability to notify a specific department through automated email that a person has gone missing. The COMPACT database can be used to create new tasks as well as self-generating appropriate tasks for each incident according to the identified risk assessment.
3.3 Initial Reports

MPs & those who are absent may be reported to the police by relatives or third parties, at a police station, by telephone, or to a patrol officer and it is crucial that the information initially gathered is as accurate as possible.

The initial actions required when dealing missing persons are as follows:

Where any police officer or staff member receives the report of a MP they will:

- Obtain details and circumstances of the disappearance;
- Identify any immediate risk;
- Identify any immediate enquires to be carried out;
- Arrange for a MP investigation to be documented;
- Obtain a photograph or arrange a digital photograph to be e-mailed to either the designated LPT officer;
- Inform FCR and the LPT duty inspector;
- Ensure a STORM incident is created.

FCR will:

- Create a STORM incident for all MP incidents using call takers cue card, there is a specific cue card for children missing from care;
- Head the incident as ‘MP not assessed’;
- Add Assessment Team tag so checks can be completed;
- Call handler is to establish details;
- Inform the OC by activating the missing person tag;
- Notify LPT Inspector if not already completed;
- Make relevant LPT aware via a broadcast to local officers;
- Once broadcast officers with knowledge or relevant details should contact FCR to update STORM;
- High Risk incidents should be treated as a priority in accordance with D 0503 Procedure - Responding to Incidents;
- Forward any subsequent sightings to the OC.

LPT Inspector will:

- Allocate an officer to attend and complete a risk assessment with the informant as soon as practicable, or in any case within 3 hours;
- Determine current risk level once risk assessment completed;
- Retain ownership of the investigation until handed over.
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Public Protection Operations Centre (OC) will:

- Complete relevant intelligence checks, on all reported MPs upon the receipt of the report and update the results of the checks on the STORM incident;
- Upon receipt of a MPs report from FCR complete a search of COMPACT for the MPs;
- If the MPs is on the system, check warning markers, previous risk assessments and found locations and risk factors- update STORM;
- If no previous records on COMPACT, create a nominal using details held on STORM and add the resulting Personal Identification Number (PID) to STORM;
- Add sighting reports to COMPACT when notifications are received from FCR.
- A review of the risk levels of all current recorded missing persons will take place each day and will note and raise any concerns via the daily Command call. (see section 3.18.4 Missing Person Liaison Officer)

3.4 Risk Assessment Missing Persons

The LPT Inspector will be responsible for the initial risk assessment and management of the initial missing person enquiries. At the appropriate juncture, usually within 24 hours, the incident will be passed to the appropriate team who will assume responsibility for the on-going investigation.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- The full circumstances leading to a report of the person as missing, previous risk assessments and warning markers;
- Local intelligence and Police National Computer (PNC) check including any warning markers;
- Information held on legacy intelligence systems and Athena;
- In all circumstances, PNC checks on the informant and witnesses;
- Details held by any other partner agency including Probation, Social Services, Mental Health Team or Local Safeguarding Boards.

Initial risk assessments for ‘Looked After’ children and patients from Mental Health establishments, Hospitals and Care Homes will be completed by their carers/home manager/doctor prior to contacting police in accordance with the following protocols:

- SET Child Protection Procedures;
- Multi agency protocol – Adults missing from care homes, hospitals and mental health establishments.

3.5 Police Officer Attending

Actions should be prioritised in accordance with the individual incident and there is not a definitive list.
There is however a minimum standard for attendance at MP incidents it is the responsibility of the police officer allocated to the incident to ensure these actions are completed

The College of Policing APP Risk assessment and response for missing persons is a guide to an appropriate level of response based on initial and ongoing risk assessment in each case and is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No apparent risk (absent)</th>
<th>Low risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.</td>
<td>Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The risk of harm to the subject or public is assessed as likely but not serious</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely.</td>
<td>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 police search advisor (PoLSA).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.’
3.6 Wanted Missing

If a MP is wanted for an offence, or a child has escaped from lawful custody, consideration must first be given to where the greatest risk lies. An assessment should be made as to the risk grading of the MP including all information and markers such as CSE. No person graded High Risk or a child under 18 will be dealt with as a wanted person. In all other cases the decision to close COMPACT and deal with the MP as wanted must be fully documented by way of rationale recorded on the COMPACT record.

3.7 Missing Abroad

An initial report should be made on STORM and COMPACT as per guidance in section (initial response). For high all risk cases advice should be sought from the SCD international liaison desk and the procedure S 4201 Procedure - International Enquiries should be consulted.

3.8 Cross Border Cases

An initial report should be made on STORM and COMPACT and then transferred by the OIC or MPLO to the receiving force using form PP36 further advice can be sought from the MPPRO

3.9 Suicidal Drivers

If a missing person is believed to be driving a known vehicle or has access to one, the Duty Inspector must specify what action is to be taken. The Inspector must consider that a missing person intending to self-harm could do so using a vehicle. Any interaction with police vehicles may place the public, officers and the missing person at risk.

The Duty Inspector should:

- Assess the information and intelligence that is available:
  - Where this assessment does not establish a likelihood of an abnormal reaction to police intervention, they will record this on STORM & detail the police action to be taken. This will include an instruction to stop the identified vehicle if seen using normal vehicle stopping tactics;
  - If the available information and intelligence suggests to the duty inspector that the missing person could use the vehicle as a means to harm themselves or others they will inform County Silver before any action is taken. It is likely in these circumstances that the missing person would be assessed as high risk. If the immediacy of the situation does not allow for consultation with County Silver then the Duty Inspector should direct appropriate action.
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The County Tactical (Silver) will ensure that the advice of a Pursuit TA is sought. The County Tactical (Silver) will then authorise and record the police vehicle tactics or actions to be used to deal with the vehicle if sighted.

3.10 Ownership of the Investigation

A decision will be made as to who will own the investigation within 24 hrs once the initial duties of the LPT Inspector are concluded, and the STORM incident has been closed (see section).

A formal handover must take place between the LPT Inspector and the nominated team, who will then retain the responsibility for the investigation until either the individual is located or the investigation is concluded and declared inactive. (See section Sgts & Insp).

3.10.1 Designated Officer Responsibilities

An officer is to be designated to deal with each MP investigation to ensure continuity, management of the family and the continued updating of tasks and actions on COMPACT.

In complex on-going investigations consideration will be given to the use of a Single Point of Contact or the deployment of a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) to assist the family. (See B 0611 Procedure - Family Liaison Officer (FLO)).

Details of the designated officer must be documented on the missing report on COMPACT.

Upon commencement of their duty they will review all live COMPACT reports for their area of responsibility including the risk assessment and all outstanding actions.

3.10.2 LPT Inspector Responsibilities

The LPT Duty Inspector is responsible for the management of all investigations concerning MPs within their LPA. This will include the initial risk assessment of all newly reported MPs – with consideration given to ensuring that all relevant system checks are conducted (ATHENA, PNC and COMPACT). On commencement of their duty they will review all live COMPACT reports including the risk assessment and all outstanding actions.

They must ensure the COMPACT Supervision/Handover task is regularly updated providing a comprehensive audit trail as well as an informative and effective handover.
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In addition, they will be responsible for the following:

- Where the incident is High Risk contact POLSA where necessary and appropriate with regard to an on-going search strategy;
- Endorse the risk assessment made by the officer completing COMPACT, ensuring that all relevant system checks (PNC, COMPACT and ATHENA) have been conducted;
- Review the risk assessment regularly;
- Document all lines of enquiry and ensure appropriate tasks are created;
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to undertake actions and tasks.
- Consider passing to a local Detective Inspector for review and/or advice using the Detective Review process.

3.10.3 Duty Sergeant Responsibilities

In all cases the Duty Sergeant will ensure the following is complied with:

- Ensure COMPACT has been checked for previous missing reports, warning markers, risk assessments and previously found locations;
- Ensure a COMPACT log has been created and the actions documented;
- Provide sufficient resources to manage the initial stage of the investigation;
- Ensure initial searches have been completed and fully documented;
- They must ensure the supervision/handover task is regularly completed on COMPACT providing a comprehensive audit trail as well as informative and effective handover.

Consider advice and assistance from specialists, i.e. POLSA, the dog section and air support.

To further assist, the Essex missing people toolkit is available to all who are involved during any stage of an investigation.

3.11 Command Team Reviews

All missing person incidents will be reviewed by an LPA Command Team member within 24 hours of the report and:

- A further review within 48 hours;
- Further reviews as appropriate to the individual investigation and the risk that has been identified.

It is the responsibility of the officer adding the missing report to create the Command Team Review.

Assistance with reviews of cases can be requested from Serious Crime Directorate (SCD).
3.12 No Apparent Risk (Absent) - NAR (a)

If there is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public, the following actions should be completed:

- A check of COMPACT on the details given;
- LPT Inspector to be advised or any warning markers/flags;
- A check of ATHENA to be completed;
- Actions to locate the subject/gather further information to be agreed with the informant;
- Disseminate information appropriately;
- Skeleton COMPACT record will be created;
- STORM incident created with a COMPACT PID number.

The above tasks should be used to inform the decision around the appropriateness of grading a person as NAR (a). Persons who are assessed as NAR (a) will be managed by a designated LPT officer. An action plan and review period will be set on COMPACT. Review time will be set for each incident as follows:

- Review every 4 hours – Maximum of 6 reviews -24 hrs.

If the person remains NAR (a) at the time of the final review (24 hours), they will be subject to initial reporting procedures reclassified as a MP and risk assessed.

3.13 Reviews of No Apparent Risk (Absent) Reports

At the review time the designated LPT officer will review all available information. If the person has still not returned/been found, a further review period can be set with agreed actions as required. Any new or additional information will be added to the STORM incident and COMPACT record.

If there is any change in circumstance which increases the risk then the person will be re-classified to the new risk level. This is done by re-assessing the risk on the COMPACT report using the continuum of risk. If the person is no longer NAR (a) the STORM report will be closed by FCR and the COMPACT report will be closed by the designated LPT officer.

Should the person be reported as NAR (a) on three occasions in ninety days, or any other need is identified, then Vulnerability Interviews will be completed by the MPLO, and the information added to the COMPACT nominal record.
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The review period should be on a case by case basis taking into account the individual circumstances. Safeguarding measures should be considered where necessary. It is important to adopt an investigative approach to all reports; ensuring assumptions are not made about the reasons for the absence. If there are concerns for the adult’s health and well-being consideration should be given to making a referral to Health and Community Services.

3.14 Concerns for Welfare

There are limited circumstances when a missing person incident can be reclassified as a concern for welfare. In these circumstances an officer of at least the rank of Inspector must give authorisation for this change. In cases involving children the incident should be brought to the attention of a Command team member or the Silver Commander. The reasons for reclassifying an incident are:

- The call was made in error;
- The incident was classified in error by the call taker;
- The MP was not in fact missing but had got lost or lost their phone and is not considered vulnerable due to the circumstances documented.

An Athena/COMPACT check should be completed before changing the call-card to concern. It should be ascertained if this person has been missing before or if there is any relevant intelligence which may add to the concern, or highlight vulnerability or show a pattern of behaviour. (For example CSE, gang concerns, mental health etc.)

If a child has been missing for only a short period, this is not a reason to re-classify the incident to concern.

If the person has been missing previously, but this cannot be confirmed as a further missing episode, and can be fully justified and documented by the LPA Inspector or above the following should happen:

- A Police Information Report (PIR) is to be created on Athena detailing the circumstances of the concern, this PIR reference or incident number should also be signposted on the warning markers on COMPACT;
- A PP57 Essex Police request for Children’s Services or SETSAF1 referral to Social Care must be considered as a matter of course;
- This can only be authorised by an Inspector or above and the rationale clearly recorded on the incident by the Inspector before closing.

Officers are to use the updated CID94 (missing booklet) as an aide memoire when Completing Vulnerability Interviews with a found child (See B 1602 Procedure - Found Persons - Children Section 3.5)

If we, as a force do not adhere to the above procedure then the incident becomes lost within STORM and vital information gets lost.
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When a COMPACT record is completed, both the missing and found circumstances are automatically sent directly from COMPACT to Social Care.

3.15 Immediate Return of Missing Person

Should a MP return during the initial recording process, the officer will complete a missing and found report, obtain a photograph or email a digital photo to the OIC.

When a missing report is added to COMPACT an automatic notification is sent to PNC for a missing report to be created. In cases of immediate return the officer should commence the entry in the ‘Full Circumstances’ field with the wording “No PNC required, subject already found”.

The officer must follow this with a found report. The entry within the ‘Full Debrief’ field should commence with words “Subject not circulated on PNC”.

3.16 STORM

The STORM incident for Low and Medium risk cases will remain open until recorded on COMPACT and the subsequent Person Identification Number (PID) entered onto the incident. For those cases graded as High Risk the STORM incident will remain open for a minimum of 12 hours to allow for appropriate fast time command and control during initial enquiries. In all cases regardless of risk the supervisor closing the incident must ensure the COMPACT PID has been recorded.

3.17 Recording on COMPACT

The information regarding the MP investigation must be added to COMPACT as follows within three hours of the initial report;

It is imperative that quality data is entered onto the COMPACT record, as this data is used for Essex police purposes, and is shared with partner agencies, and shared nationally with the National Crime Agency. It is the responsibility of the officer to check what has been entered, and if there are any errors or discrepancies these can be addressed by either contacting an MPLO or the MPPRO. If errors are entered DO NOT LEAVE THEM.

- The STORM incident is updated with the COMPACT PID and RID number;
- A photograph of the missing person is added;
- Where a recent photograph is not available through family or friends, a convicted or non-convicted photograph via video witness may be used.
The Duty/FCR Inspector can authorise no further action and dispense with the need for a COMPACT record to be opened in the event that the person has been reported as missing in error, and the situation is highly unlikely to reoccur. There will also be a requirement to believe that had the full circumstances been known at the time of making the report, there would have been no concern for that person’s welfare.

The rationale must be recorded onto the STORM incident.

3.18 Areas of Responsibility

3.18.1 Searches

All searches will be the responsibility of and managed by the LPT Inspector. They will be responsible for consulting the Police Search Adviser (PolSA) duty officer regarding High Risk incidents and in all cases within 24 hours if the person has not been located.

It will be the decision of PolSA to use, call out and liaise with volunteer search and rescue organisations.

The Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) can support the search for High Risk MPs when the request is made through Tactical (Silver) (with POLSA advice). Tactical (Silver) will then have a discussion with ECFRS duty Interagency Liaison Officer (ILO), with additional assets sent from ECFRS. This may also include the use of specialist units such as Urban Search and Rescue teams (USAR), drones and enhanced thermal imaging devices.

The Duty Inspector may also consider seeking advice from PolSA in other cases.

3.18.2 Social Media Release for Missing Persons

Any request to utilise social media in enquiries must go via the Press Office.

- High risk cases should be notified to the Press Office (day or night) by the Inspector having ownership of the investigation at that time.
- Medium risk cases must have specific exacerbating risk factors a concrete belief that a media roles will assist and all other means of tracing the individual have been tried without success. Discussion by the Inspector should take place with the press office.

Considerations prior to contacting the press office, Out of Office Hours Requests and MPLO Job Description are detailed to support the decision making process.

During office hours the Press Office must be notified immediately a missing person has been found in order for the Social media post to be removed.
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Outside of office hours the LPA will have to take responsibility for updating the on-call press officer by text message that the person has been found. There has to be caution around what content is included, especially if the person is found deceased or has been a subject of crime. An email should also be sent to the press office so that it can be removed as soon as appropriate.

All publicity for missing people MUST be made via the Press Office and individual officers should not post on social media.

3.18.3 BTP Liaison

The responsibility for the investigation of missing persons lies with the relevant LPA, however BTP have a valuable role to play in supporting relevant investigations. It is also possible that the initial report of a MP may be made to BTP and in such cases the initial information will be taken by BTP to enable an assessment as to the need for any immediate action.

BTP will ensure that the relevant LPA is informed and arrangements are made by that policing area for them to deal directly with the reporting person(s) and to manage the investigation.

Clearly, it is not necessary or appropriate for BTP to be routinely advised of all investigations but, consideration should be given to notify BTP if:

- BTP has placed a suicide risk or related information marker on PNC or;
- There is a risk of suicide (particularly if the MP resides, frequents or was last seen within the vicinity of a railway line);
- There is specific information that they are likely to visit or use the railway system.

Engagement with BTP should form part of the investigation strategy and should be related to tangible lines of enquiry or search strategies. Where there is risk of suicide or other serious harm is likely, immediate assistance from BTP can be obtained in relation to intelligence checks, CCTV, ticketing enquiries and other railway-related matters. These enquiries can be initiated by a telephone call to the BTP control room on 0800 405 040.

3.18.4 Missing Person Liaison Officer (MPLO)

The main purpose of the role is:

- To maintain a comprehensive overview of missing people within a defined area in order to identify those who are at risk of significant harm;
- To coordinate the response from internal departments and partners in order to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring to vulnerable people;
- MPPRO/MPLO will review risk levels of all current recorded missing persons each day and will note and raise any concerns via the daily Command call.
The main responsibilities of the MPLOs are listed in the attached MPLO Job Description and also include ownership and management of Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs), liaising with the LPAs to identify non-compliance on order that any remedial action can be taken.

### 3.18.5 Migrant Children

In cases which involve or are suspected to involve migrant children the following must occur:

- When suspected migrants, particularly unaccompanied migrant children, are detained full consideration is given to their status as potential victims of trafficking and that referral to the National Referral Mechanism is made in appropriate circumstances;
- Biometric data is secured;
- Safeguarding liaison is undertaken with local care authorities to provide effective ‘wrap-around’ care, particularly in the critical first few days when the child is most vulnerable;
- All data collected to be recorded on the COMPACT record;
- Those responsible for the ‘missing’ portfolio in your force area, MPLO’s, engage with the local authorities to ensure they are meeting the requirements detailed in the aforementioned DoE migrant Children guidance.

#### 3.18.5.1 Children at High Risk of CSE and Missing 3 times in 90 days.

All officers and staff should be aware of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Essex police will consider any child shown as High Risk of CSE who goes missing 3 times within 90 days as a trafficked child. In such cases a referral will be made using the NRM. The referral can be made by any officer or staff member and it is for supervisors and managers of missing persons to ensure such a referral is made.

Any and all OPTICA or phone data requests are to be made available to the COMPACT record with all reference numbers recorded, with the submitting officer, and any product received must be uploaded to document management on a relevant ATHENA record. (see section 3.20 in respect of communications data).

### 3.19 Found Missing Persons

Essex Police as the lead agency for locating MPs will be responsible for all initial actions relating to found persons regardless of risk grading or age. As such when a person is found Essex Police will conduct within 24 hrs a Vulnerability Interview (VI) with all High Risk MPs and all those aged under 18.

In cases which have been assessed as Medium, Low Risk, or NAR (a), a PCSO may conduct the VI with the approval of an officer of the rank of sergeant or above. Details of the VI are to be shared with Social Care.
If a MP refuses to answer questions during a vulnerability interview it is important that their demeanour and appearance are recorded. The officer must note any observations that may indicate ‘hidden harms’, or potential vulnerabilities. ‘Refused to answer’ added to a COMPACT found report is not acceptable.

In addition to VIs all missing children will be offered an Independent return Interview (IRI) by the local authority in which they live, in order that indications of exploitation or harm can be further assessed. (See SET Child Protection Procedures; (part B section 20.5.14-15). A synopsis of the interview will then be sent to the Missing person liaison officers.

All enquiries and investigations relating to MPs, after they are found, are contained in B 1602 Procedure – Found Persons.

3.19.1 Found - Deceased

Once a missing person appeal has been made in the media and on Social Media then it cannot simply be deleted or withdrawn – it must be updated to reflect the change in circumstances, that a body has been found and that a search has been called off.

If the body has not been formally identified then care must be taken to avoid language which suggests the body is definitely the person being looked for.

News of a death is likely to travel fast with members of the public posting on the Essex Police Facebook page or Twitter information about a death, asking us for confirmation and mainstream media are likely to quickly pick this up. For this reason we must respond quickly on our own channels.

However NO update should be provided on any public communication channel until the next of kin have been advised of the death, the need to update the media and social media has been explained to them and they have been given a chance to comment on any proposed media statement.

A draft statement will be prepared by the press office and sent to the LPA Inspector in charge of the MP enquiry. It is their responsibility to ensure the above steps are carried out and to notify the press office that the statement has been approved for release.

3.19.2 Reviews - Missing Persons found Deceased

The primary aim for completing such reviews is to identify any relevant organisational learning. The review will be reported to the Head of Crime and Public Protection Command and the relevant recommendations adjudicated upon and progressed.

Where such reviews highlight any disciplinary or conduct matters, this will be subject of a report to Professional Standards Department (PSD).
A review will be completed by any or all of the following:

- MPPRO;
- Internal Serious Case Review Team;

(See B 1602 Procedure – Found Persons).

3.19.3 Conclusion of the Investigation - Inactive Reports

Where all current lines of enquiry have been concluded, and provided there are no suspicious circumstances, the command team reviewing officer may show the record ‘inactive’ on COMPACT pending re-activation as a result of new information that may be given. Where there are suspicious circumstances the decision to make inactive will be made by the SIO.

The designated missing person liaison officers are responsible for monitoring the Inactive Missing Persons on COMPACT and will ensure the relevant Command Teams are aware of an impending review to be completed. The reviews are on-going and are to be completed within every 12 month period.

3.19.4 Closing Incidents for Persons not Seen

Incidents where the MP has been located or their whereabouts are known, but it is impractical or impossible to see them, the investigation can be closed with the authority of a Chief Inspector.

This includes persons who are deliberately avoiding police or who have gone abroad and there is no evidence to suggest a crime has occurred or that anything untoward has happened to them.

The investigation is closed by adding a found report on COMPACT with the details included in the ‘de-brief’ section.

Details of MPs believed to be illegal immigrants/over stayers who are deliberately avoiding police should be passed to the Border Agency and the police investigation can then be closed. Under 18’s will remain as police MPs.

It is imperative that the person has been processed by the Home Office and has a Home Officer number. Otherwise the Border Agency will not accept the referral, at which point our investigation will remain open.
3.19.5 Closure of a Missing Person Report

When a MP is located, the relevant Inspector will ensure:

- All reviews are completed;
- Any relevant circulations have been cancelled;
- All relevant documentation including risk assessments and search logs are collated scanned and uploaded to the ATHENA record;
- COMPACT is updated and endorsed with the location of the documentation.

3.19.6 Missing Children (under 18 yrs.)

- Children who go missing from Home and Care are managed by Essex Police in accordance with the SET Child Protection Procedures; the response to missing children under 18 should be effective and collaborative, involving all agencies.

3.19.7 Intervention Notices

When a person has been missing 3 times in 90 days, or 5 occasions over any period of time, COMPACT will generate an intervention notice for the individual, which is sent to the Missing Person Liaison Inbox.

It will be the responsibility of the MPLO to view these notices, identify if any other departments need advising, internal or external, and action appropriately by way of a Strategy meeting. This will then show the intervention notice completed.

Intervention notices are stored and are searchable on the COMPACT system.

3.19.8 Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN)

CAWNs can be valuable in assisting the safeguarding of vulnerable young people and provide supportive evidence for criminal or other proceedings.

These Warning Notices are useful in disrupting the criminal activity of adults who are associating with young people against the wishes of the parents or local authority carers. The Notices can be used where arrest or prosecution for any substantive offences is not available or is not appropriate at that time.

There are two notices:

- Section 2 Child Abduction Act 1984 is for a child under 16;
- Section 49 Children Act 1989 is for a child under 18 who is in the care of a Local Authority.
Both notices together with guidance notes on completion can be found within Form CID96. There is also a flow chart to assist with CAWN’s. It can be viewed on the Missing person Intranet Website.

The notice identifies the child or young person and confirms that the suspect has no permission to associate with or to contact or communicate with the child, and that if they continue to do so, they may be liable to arrest and prosecution for one of the offences outlined above.

3.19.9 Issuing the Warning Notice

A warning notice should be viewed as a safeguarding measure for the child concerned as well as a proactive case building initiative. Furthermore, they can be used as evidence when making other applications to the court such as Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders:

A Detective Inspector may authorise the issuing of a Child Abduction Warning Notice where a child under the age of 16 years (or 18yrs if in Local Authority Care):

- Is reported missing and found on 2 or more occasions to be in the company of a suspect;
- There are reports to indicate the subjects (misper) behaviour and association with a suspect is giving significant cause for concern.

The Detective Inspector will ensure that an entry is placed on COMPACT and that the following checks have been made:

- PNC;
- ATHENA
- Notify the Assessment and Triage Teams who will check the sex offenders register (ViSOR)/ MAPPA / Violent Offenders.

A CAWN can be issued on the first missing occasion provided the Detective Inspector considers that it is proportionate and appropriate to do so.

A statement will be taken from the person responsible for lawful care of the child to include:

- Clarification of parental responsibility, child’s name, age and date of birth;
- The fact that the restrictions and wishes of the parent or carer have been made clear to the child;
- The concerns the parent or carer has for the child arising from the association, with the named person;
• The provision of a recent good quality photograph which should be exhibited within the statement;
• Permission for the photograph to be shown to the suspect at the time the warning is delivered.

3.19.10 Serving the Warning Notice

Notices will be prepared using Form CID97.

The exact wording contained within the notice must be read to the suspect. A photograph to be shown to the suspect clearly identifying the young person to whom the notice refers.

The suspect will be issued with two copies of the notice and requested to sign both. The suspect is to retain one copy the other is to be retained by Essex Police and uploaded to COMPACT and Athena. If the suspect refuses to sign, the officer will endorse the notice.

IMPORTANT CAWN’s must be recorded on Athena and the number placed on COMPACT.

CAWN’s must be attached to the suspect person’s iteration. If the suspect is not known on ATHENA, person iteration MUST be created for this purpose.

MPLOs will be responsible for the management of all CAWNS irrespective of risk, and will liaise with the LPA as regards to enforcement. Also there will be a requirement to ensure details of the CAWN have been added to the MPs nominal record (PID).

3.19.11 Child Rescue Alerts (CRA)

A Child Rescue Alert (CRA) is a partnership between the police, the media and the public that seeks the assistance of the public where a child has been abducted and it is feared that they may be at risk of serious harm.

The aim is to quickly engage the entire community via media (TV and radio) in the search for the child, offender or any specified vehicle through reports of sightings to the police.

The key aim is the preservation of a child’s life and should be in the best interests of the investigation. Arrest of the offender is an ancillary benefit.

Child Rescue Alert is a tactical option for a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to consider as part of an overt police response to child abduction where the release of specific information to the public via media agencies may assist in the safe recovery of a child.
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For full details see S 1702 Procedure/SOP – Child Rescue Alert.

3.20 Acquisition, Disclosure and Retention of Communications Data

The acquisition, of communications data in an emergency can include situations where, for example, there are serious concerns for the welfare of a vulnerable person. These are legitimate lines of enquiry which can yield valuable information and can assist in the location of missing persons. Those involved in missing persons investigations should be familiar with current guidance as follows:

- Code of Practice for the Acquisition and Disclosure of Communications Data
- Code of Practice for the Retention of Communications Data

All applications will be made using the OPTICA system.

4.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- EIA form.

5.0 Risk Assessment

Risks identified as having a bearing upon the safety of the person reported missing are dealt with at 3.3.

6.0 Consultation

The following were invited to provide feedback in the consultation phase during the formulation of this document:

- Local Policing Areas (LPA) Command Team;
- Crime & Public Protection (C&PP) Command Team;
- Crime & Public Protection Command Operations Centre (C&PPC OC)
- Force Control Room (FCR)
- Unison
- Police Federation
- Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator
- Health & Safety
- Strategic Change team
- Professional Standards Department (PSD)
- Policy/Risk
- Superintendents Association
- SCD
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7.0 Monitoring and Review

The Crime and Public Protection Strategic Centre will be responsible for reviewing this procedure every 12 months to ensure that continues to be fit for purpose and it remains consistent with national guidance.

8.0 Governing Force policy. Related Force policies or related procedures

- B 1600 Policy - Missing Persons
- B 1602 Procedure – Found Persons
- B 1200 Policy - Child Abuse Investigations
- D 0400 Policy - Critical Incidents
- B 1203 Procedure - Child Abduction
- D 0401 Procedure – Dealing with Critical Incidents
- S 1702 Procedure/SOP – Child Rescue Alert
- S 4200 Policy – International Enquiries
- S 4201 Procedure – International Enquiries

9.0 Other source documents, e.g. legislation, Authorised Professional Practice (APP), Force forms, partnership agreements (if applicable)

- Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from Home or Care Jan 2014
- ACPO Family Liaison Guidance 2008;
- Guidance Child Abduction Warning Notices;
- Mental Health/Learning Disabilities Protocol;
- Grampian Document;
- LSCB Protocol agreement.
- Dept of Education – Joint Protocol – Disclosing details on their Register of children’s homes with local authorities, the police etc.
- Southend, Essex and Thurrock, Children & Young People Who Go Missing or Run Away from Home or Care Protocol;
- 2016 APP guidance – Major investigations – Missing persons.
- B 1601 Additional Guidance Document
- Form CID96 – Child Abduction Warnings Checklist
- Form CID97 – Initial tasks for Missing Persons
- Missing Persons Process Map
- Continuum of risk
- COMPACT Risk Flags
- Trigger plan
- Multi agency protocol – Adults missing from care homes, hospitals and mental health establishments
- Definitive list
- Risk assessment and response
- Considerations prior to contacting the press office
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- Out of officer hours requests
- MPLO job description
- DoE migrant children guidance
- flow chart to assist with CAWN’s
- Detective Review
- Essex missing people toolkit
- Form CID94 – missing person report/booklet