



## **HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**

**Local Policing+ Inspection: the management of vulnerable adults, children and young people reported missing in Police Scotland Aberdeen Division**

### **Terms of Reference**

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# HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

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HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) is established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012<sup>1</sup> and has wide ranging powers to look into the *'state, effectiveness and efficiency'* of both the Police Service of Scotland, (Police Scotland) and the Scottish Police Authority.

We have a statutory duty to ensure that the Chief Constable and the Authority meet their obligations in terms of best value and continuous improvement. If necessary, we can be directed by Scottish Ministers to look into anything relating to the Authority or Police Scotland as they consider appropriate. We also have an established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

- Our powers allow us to do anything we consider necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of our functions.
- The Authority and the Chief Constable must provide us with such assistance and co-operation as we may require, enabling us to carry out our functions.
- When we publish a report, the Authority and the Chief Constable must also consider what we have found and take such measures, if any, as they think fit.
- Where we make recommendations, we will follow them up and report publicly on progress.
- We will identify good practice that can be applied across Scotland.
- We work with other inspectorates and agencies across the public sector and co-ordinate our activities to reduce the burden of inspection and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- We aim to add value and strengthen public confidence in Scottish policing and will do this through independent scrutiny and objective evidence-led reporting about what we find.

Our approach is to support Police Scotland and the Authority to deliver services that are high quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to local needs.<sup>2</sup>

**This Local Policing+ inspection will be undertaken by HMICS in terms of the Section 74(2) (a) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and will be laid before the Scottish Parliament in terms of Section 79(3) of the Act.**

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<sup>1</sup> Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Chapter 11: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2012/8/contents/enacted>

<sup>2</sup> HMICS Corporate Strategy 2014-17: <http://www.hmics.org/publications/corporate-strategy-2014-2017>

## Our Inspection

### Aim

1. The aim of this inspection is to **assess the state, effectiveness and efficiency of the arrangements for the management of adults, children and young people** reported missing in Police Scotland Aberdeen Division<sup>3</sup>. Whilst we are interested in all categories of missing person, we wish to focus particularly on the most vulnerable adults, children and young people during this inspection. For the purposes of this inspection, vulnerable adults will be interpreted as persons over 16 who may be classed as 'adults at risk' and those 'at risk of harm' in accordance with the definitions given in Sections 3 (1) and (2) of the *Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007*. In respect of children and young people, we will follow the definition of child given by the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995*, so we include young people between the age of 16 and 18 who are still subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing.

2. This inspection will comprise the **+ element** of a wider inspection of local policing arrangements in Aberdeen to be conducted early in 2015 under the HMICS Local Policing+ Programme<sup>4</sup>. However, as part of this + element, we will also examine national oversight of missing person management within Police Scotland, and will explore all aspects of the investigation cycle from initial reporting, assessment of risk and investigation, through to harm reduction strategies and working with other agencies.

### Background

3. Official UK data on missing persons shows that approximately 190,000 people go missing each year with around 22,000 people going missing in Scotland<sup>5</sup>. In 2011/12 legacy Scottish police forces recorded 32,622 missing person *incidents* which is equivalent to 6.2 *incidents* per 1,000 population. This is higher than the average figure for the rest of the UK which was 5.0 *incidents* per 1,000 population.

4. The number of missing *incidents* recorded on police command and control systems in 2012/13 was 306,118<sup>6</sup> and there were 32,799 recorded *incidents* in Scotland. However, the number of *incidents* does not correlate with the total number of individuals reported missing in any given year as some people will be reported missing on multiple occasions. In total, **children and young people 18 years and under make up 64% of the missing incidents** in the UK and **children in the 15-17 age group make up 35% of the total missing person reports**. In addition, the UK data suggests that **15% of all persons reported are missing from care establishments**. Children in care are three times more

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<sup>3</sup> A child can be defined differently in different legal contexts. Section 93(2) (a) and (b) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 defines a child in relation to the powers and duties of the local authority. Young people between the age of 16 and 18 who are still subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing can be viewed as a child.

<sup>4</sup> HMICS Corporate Plan 2014-17: <http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/CORPORATE%20STRATEGY%202014-17%20v1.0%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> UK Missing Persons Bureau: Missing Persons Data and Analysis 2012/13 <http://missingpersons.police.uk/en/resources/missing-persons-data-analysis-2012-13>

<sup>6</sup> Source: NCA UK Missing Persons Bureau Data Analysis: <http://www.missingpersons.police.uk/>

likely to go missing from their home than children who are not in care<sup>7</sup> and various toolkits exist to help agencies protect those children<sup>8</sup>. However, due to the unreliability of wider UK data it is likely that the true scale of the problem is not fully understood<sup>9</sup>.

5. A number of recent high profile cases concerning child sexual exploitation and high-profile public inquiries have highlighted the vulnerability of children who go missing, and the associated risk of sexual exploitation<sup>10</sup>. The importance of dealing with missing person investigations effectively from the outset cannot be over-emphasised and experience has shown that in some instances the report of a missing person is the first indicator that a serious crime has occurred. The relationship between running away and going missing and the risk of child sexual exploitation is well documented<sup>11</sup> and lack of appropriate action by the police can in turn deter other professionals from reporting in the future<sup>12</sup>. Such issues require a multi-agency framework and response and this has led to the publication of Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) published in November 2014<sup>13</sup>.

6. With regards to national strategic direction, the Scottish Government has convened a National Missing Persons Steering Group to work with partners to coordinate the development of a National Missing Persons Action Plan and underpinning strategy. It is envisaged that a draft Action Plan and Strategy will be published in summer 2015. Within this broad context, it is acknowledged that whilst there is a recognised link between missing and CSE, these remain separate issues and CSE is one of many related dangers facing missing persons, many of which overlap.

7. National (UK) policing guidance on the management, recording and investigation of missing persons exists to enable effective investigation supported by relevant management structures. The national guidance seeks to protect those at risk from harm, ensuring a high quality of service to the families and carers of missing persons and prosecuting those who perpetrate harm or pose a risk of harm<sup>14</sup>. In addition, the National Crime Agency operates a UK Missing Persons Bureau which serves as the national (UK) and international point of contact for all missing person and unidentified body investigations<sup>15</sup>.

8. Each year, police forces in the UK receive more than 100,000 reports of missing adults. Up to 80 per cent of these adults have mental health issues, and a significant number have experience of domestic violence, financial problems, family conflict, or alcohol problems. In addition, research has shown that 40 per cent of adults who have dementia will go missing at some point, mostly unintentionally. Being missing makes all of these adults more vulnerable, as they are separated from

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<sup>7</sup> Data from End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT); [www.ecpat.org.uk](http://www.ecpat.org.uk)

<sup>8</sup> See for example The Children's Society 'Young runaways' toolkit: <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources/protecting-young-runaways>

<sup>9</sup> Missing Children: report by Ofsted: February 2013

<sup>10</sup> The absence of national strategy in Scotland in relation to tackling child sexual exploitation has also been highlighted. Public Petitions Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> report 2014, Report on tackling child sexual exploitation in Scotland, Scottish Parliament: 14 January 2014: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Reports/puR-14-01w-rev-v3.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Reports/puR-14-01w-rev-v3.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Smeaton, E. (2013) *Running from hate to what you think is love: The relationship between running away and child sexual exploitation*.

<sup>12</sup> NSPCC Scotland, written submission to Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee on tackling child sexual exploitation in Scotland.

<sup>13</sup> Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation, Scottish Government 2014: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0046/00463120.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Guidance on The Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons, NPIA, 2010:

<sup>15</sup> National Crime Agency, UK Missing Persons Bureau: <http://www.missingpersons.police.uk/>

their support networks and professional help, and are at greater risk of becoming a victim of crime. Sadly, around one in every 100 people who go missing is found to have died, with suicide one of the most common causes.

9. Missing person investigations should be regarded as a high-risk area of policing and given appropriate levels of priority and resources. Joint work by police forces and partner agencies can make significant inroads to reducing the volume of unnecessary reports by taking a proactive or problem-solving approach. Such approaches help to reduce the number of missing person incidents that need to be dealt with by the police and lower the risk of harm to these vulnerable people. This can only be achieved by understanding the cause of their going missing<sup>16</sup>. The top ten locations for persons going missing in Scotland are health and social care settings and it is therefore essential that the police work collaboratively with other agencies<sup>17</sup>.

10. A person going missing should be regarded as an indicator of other issues. Such incidents may lead to uncovering exploitative and criminal behaviour against children, young people and vulnerable adults. There is usually a reason why a person goes missing, and understanding the circumstances and causes creates an opportunity for the police and other relevant authorities to identify intervention measures that can stop or minimise further disappearances. More importantly, it will draw attention to safeguarding issues related to the missing episode and assist in the identification and investigation of crimes which are linked to, or are the cause of, someone going missing.

11. In addition to these primary public safety considerations, there are broader effectiveness, efficiency and best value considerations for the police service with academic research indicating that the average cost of a police missing person enquiry to the police in the UK is £1325 - £2415<sup>18</sup>. More broadly, a person in the UK is recorded as missing by the police approximately every two minutes and a wealth of agencies – police, charities, health, social workers – are charged with searching for the subject, and supporting those left behind<sup>19</sup>. Based on 33,000 missing person reports to the police in Scotland each year, the academic data would support an indicative calculation that the notional cost to Police Scotland of managing missing person enquiries each year could be somewhere in a range from £43.7 million to £79.6 million, which would be equivalent to notional expenditure between 3.1% and 5.6% of the annual policing budget.

### Key Research Questions for Aberdeen Division

12. There are **five** key research questions that will guide the Aberdeen inspection activity:

- Are missing persons reports being **recorded** properly in Aberdeen Division, and what is the nature and extent of the problem?
- Are there effective command **oversight, leadership and effective governance** arrangements?

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<sup>16</sup> Missing People, Registered Charity No 1020419: <http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/about-us/about-the-issue/campaigns/121-manifesto-for-missing-people/410-call-two-vulnerable-adults-need-return-interviews-and-support.html>

<sup>17</sup> Police Scotland Missing Persons Strategic Assessment 2014

<sup>18</sup> Centre for the study of missing persons, University of Portsmouth: <http://www.port.ac.uk/uopnews/2012/08/06/cost-of-missing-persons-investigation-revealed/>

<sup>19</sup> Geographies of missing people: processes, experiences, responses: Scottish Institute of Policing Research: <http://www.geographiesofmissingpeople.org.uk/downloads/Stevenson-et-al.pdf>

- Are **investigations** into missing persons being conducted properly in Aberdeen Division in accordance with national (UK) professional practice advice and in line with approved Police Scotland policies and procedures?
- Is the **return** of missing persons being effectively managed in Aberdeen Division with regard to safe and well checks and the capture and identification of information and intelligence on threat, risk and harm through return interviews?
- Is appropriate information and intelligence being shared with key partners to inform partnership strategies and responses which effectively manage risk and contribute to the outcome of keeping people safe and demonstrable **harm reduction**?

## Methodology

13. Our methodological approach seeks to answer the key research questions and also seeks to explore broader national arrangements through the lens of this inspection including linkages to Scotland’s National Action Plan to tackle child sexual exploitation. To achieve this, our inspection will comprise of a blend of qualitative and quantitative research techniques and will seek to explore how effective the management of vulnerable adults, children and young persons reported missing is in Police Scotland generally, and in Aberdeen Division specifically. We will do this by using our Inspection Framework and by examining practice against professional and technical guidance and by considering all aspects of the investigation cycle from initial reporting, assessment of risk and investigation, through to harm reduction strategies and working with other agencies. The investigative cycle for missing person investigations and our Inspection Framework are illustrated by the following diagram.

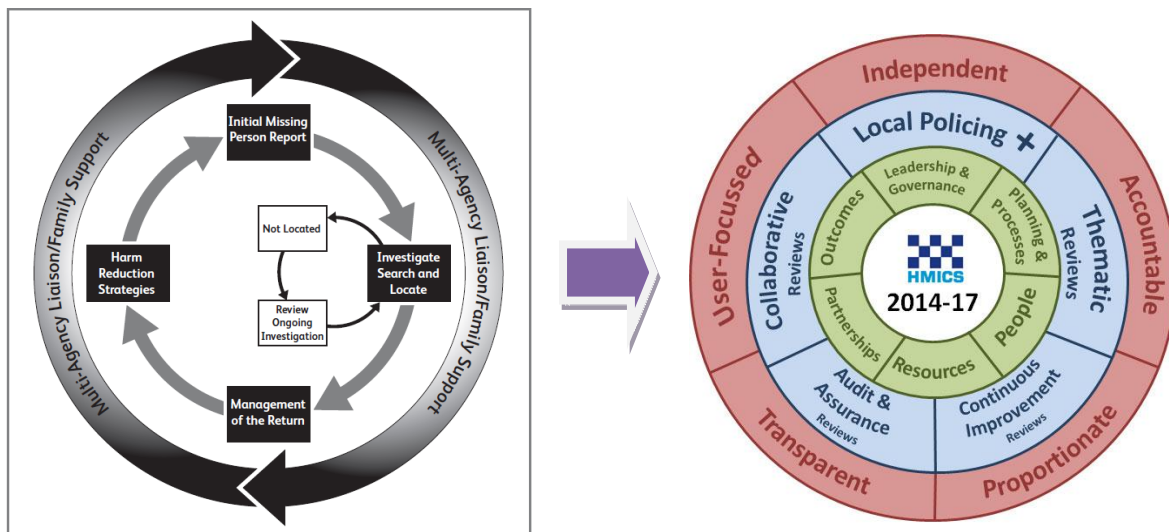


Figure 1: The Investigative Cycle for missing persons<sup>20</sup> and the HMICS Inspection Framework

<sup>20</sup> College of Policing: 2014

14. As part of this, our envisaged methodology will include:

#### **Aberdeen Inspection activity**

The local 'inspection' activity in Aberdeen division will include:

- An inspection of command and control systems to test reported incident-to-recorded missing person report compliance<sup>21</sup> (sample size envisaged as 100% of reports for calendar year 2014 – circa 1225 reports – to achieve 100% confidence)<sup>22</sup>
- An audit and inspection of completed missing person reports (detailed audit of all reports October to December 2014 – circa 400 reports) to assess compliance with the recording of mandatory information as specified in the new Police Scotland missing persons SOP<sup>23</sup> and missing person aide memoire (Section A: -Essential Core Information)
- Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the managerial systems, quality control and risk management processes in place in 'A' Division to oversee, manage and audit missing persons investigations through interviews with key individuals. This to include an assessment of local missing person performance/analysis, including daily/weekly and trends
- Examine how the return of missing persons is managed in 'A' Division with particular reference to 'safe-and-well' checks by the police and how information and intelligence from 'return interviews' is captured, assessed and managed. This to include linkages to the police public protection unit, concern-hub and the management of data in relation to vulnerable persons through the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (IVPD)
- To explore partnership arrangements and harm reduction strategies exist within 'A' Division to reduce repeat incidences and locations of persons going missing and operational relationships with care providers.
- In accordance with our duty of user focus<sup>24</sup> we will draw in external assistance to gain service users perspectives on local policing from the identified health and social care settings known to comprise the highest percentages of missing person incidents reported to the police in Aberdeen<sup>25</sup>. (Note: The specific identity of these health and social care settings in Aberdeen will not be publicly disclosed in the HMICS report in the interests of the protection of vulnerable adults and children). As part of this to consider looked after and accommodated children focusing on their missing experience and the effectiveness of the return interview and any correlation between young people going missing and the threat of CSE in Scotland.
- Interviews with staff with strategic and tactical responsibilities and focus groups with local operational officers, analysts and other key staff
- Observing at local meetings where missing persons are discussed and to assess local performance frameworks

#### **National Assessment Activity**

The wider related national 'assessment' activity will include:

- Review of the Police Scotland Strategic Assessments for missing person investigations and supporting intelligence products

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<sup>21</sup> This inspection will be of all missing persons incidents on command and control.

<sup>22</sup> Checks will also be made of PW-72 (concern for person), and PW-76 (child protection)

<sup>23</sup> Police Scotland introduced new national Standard Operating Procedures in October 2014

<sup>24</sup> HMICS is designated as a 'Listed Authority' under the Public Sector Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 and therefore has a legal duty to secure continuous improvement in user focus in the exercise of our scrutiny functions [Section 112 (1)].

<sup>25</sup> HMICS will draw on the support of the Scottish Institute of Policing Research (SIPR), Children in Scotland.org and the Care Inspectorate.

- Examine the Police Scotland missing persons strategy to understand the strategic direction of travel
- Review the capability assessments (self-evaluation) conducted by Police Scotland in relation to missing persons in Aberdeen and other police divisions in Scotland
- Assess how well the Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedures for missing persons investigations align to wider national UK guidance, to include supporting media/telecoms and investigative guidance
- Examine missing person training materials including the missing person e-learning modules and 'missing person – understanding/planning/responding –Version 2 refresh'
- Consider the effectiveness of Police Scotland national performance indicators in relation missing persons, and how well these align to intended outcomes and broader harm reduction strategies
- Examine the governance arrangements around live missing person investigation management across Scotland, including missing person strategic and tactical groups and the arrangements for divisional and departmental missing person tactical coordinators and operational coordinators
- Assess how learning outcomes improve practice following national missing person reviews
- Examine the role of the Police Scotland Strategic Missing Person Coordinator and National Missing Persons Unit
- Liaise with the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner for Scotland (PIRC) with regards to lessons learned from independent reviews of cases involving missing persons
- Liaise with the College of Policing and ACPO in relation to Police Scotland engagement and influence over national UK guidance in relation to missing persons investigations
- Liaise with the NCA UK Missing Persons Bureau on Police Scotland interface; - as the UK national and international point of contact for all missing person and unidentified body investigations and holders of the national UK database of missing and unidentified records
- Examine linkages to other strategic national partnerships such as Missing People Charity
- Review national governance arrangements supporting the on-going investigative review processes of around 600 missing persons, 65 body parts and over 300 unidentified bodies dating back to 1950 and their management by Police Scotland
- Observations at Strategic and Tactical national missing persons forums held by Police Scotland
- Examine linkages between missing persons investigations, developing 'rich-picture' information and intelligence, and progress on the Police Scotland specific actions in Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and specifically (a) Communications strategy to be developed for and with Police Scotland to deliver key messages to Police Scotland staff to increase awareness of CSE; (b) Police Scotland National Online Abuse Prevention and proactive policing of the internet to identify perpetrators of child sexual abuse and CSE; (c) Developing a National Child Abuse Investigation Unit, and (d) The use of a specific CSE marker on the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (IVPD) to allow for accurate identification of individuals at risk

### **Reporting timeframe**

15. We envisage that our report into the state, effectiveness and efficiency of the arrangements for the management of reported vulnerable adults, missing children and young people in Police Scotland Aberdeen Division will be published in June 2015 and will be laid before the Scottish Parliament in terms of Section 79 (3) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.



16. Further information on this proposed inspection may be obtained from Dr. Brian Plastow, HMICS Lead Inspector on 0131 244 5624 or via e-mail to [brian.plastow@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:brian.plastow@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

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