HMICS

Local Policing+ Inspection of the Approach to Missing Person Investigations in Aberdeen City Division

June 2015

Improving Policing Across Scotland

HM Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) is established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (the Act) 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 (SPA).[1]

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 to enable 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.[2]

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

---

[1] Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Chapter 11.
[2] HMICS, *Corporate Strategy 2014-17* (2014).

Contents

Our inspection

The aim of this inspection was to **assess the state, effectiveness and efficiency of the investigative arrangements for adults, children and young people reported missing in Police Scotland Aberdeen City Division.**[3] Whilst we have inspected the approach to investigation through the lens of local policing in Aberdeen, we have also had regard to the wider national arrangements by examination of broader strategic arrangements within Police Scotland. This includes a detailed assessment of national approaches to all aspects of the missing person investigations from initial reporting and recording, assessment of risk and investigation, through to management of the return and working with other agencies around harm reduction strategies.[4] A map showing the location of Aberdeen City Division and other Police Scotland divisions is included as **Appendix 'A'** to this report.

This inspection comprised the + element of a wider inspection of local policing arrangements in Aberdeen conducted early in 2015 under the HMICS Local Policing + Programme.[5] This inspection, which forms part of our published scrutiny plan,[6] is the third in our local policing inspection programme and follows on from our pilot inspection of Fife Division. Our findings from the local policing inspection in Aberdeen City Division are subject of a separate report which is available on the HMICS website.[7] Our programme provides flexibility to scrutinise new and emerging issues affecting policing in Scotland. These issues are identified through a process of stakeholder engagement and informed by our scrutiny risk assessment.

Inspections of police divisions are based on our framework which ensures a consistent and objective approach to our work. This framework considers six overarching themes, namely:

- ■ Outcomes
- ■ Leadership and Governance
- ■ Planning and Process
- ■ People
- ■ Resources
- ■ Partnerships

As a consequence of our inspection, Police Scotland will be asked to create an action plan, so that our recommendations are taken forward to enable relevant good practice to be disseminated across Scotland to promote continuous improvement. We will monitor progress against this plan and publish our findings as part of our annual reporting process.

---

[3] 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.
[4] Methodology published in HMICS Terms of Reference, January 2014
http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/HMICS%20LP%2B%20Missing%20Persons%20-%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20-%20January%202015.pdf
[5] HMICSCorporatePlan2014-17:
http://www.hmics.org/sites/default/files/publications/CORPORATE%20STRATEGY%202014-17%20v1.0%20FINAL.pdf.
[6] HMICS (May 2014), Scrutiny Plan 2014-2015. http://www.hmics.org/publications/hmics-scrutiny-plan-2014-2015.
[7] http://hmics.org/publications/local-policing-inspection-programme-inspection-aberdeen-city-division

Key facts – about missing people in Scotland

Figure 1: Key facts about missing people in Scotland

32,000 missing episodes were recorded by Police Scotland in 2014.

The costs to other services and agencies in Scotland are not known.

Police Scotland estimate the policing cost of missing person investigations as £30m to £80m each year.

Missing person reports account for 1.2% of annual incidents recorded by Police Scotland, but investigations can be resource intensive.

The top 100 repeat missing-from locations account for 23% of all missing episodes reported to Police Scotland.

The top 10 missing-from locations in Scotland are children's homes and hospitals.

There are more than 600 long-term missing people, 300 unidentified bodies and 65 unidentified body parts dating back to 1950.

Police Scotland cannot differentiate the actual number of people reported missing from these 32,000 episodes.

On average, 10 people reported missing each year in Scotland will remain untraced.

Over 99% of missing episodes conclude with the missing person being traced safe and well.

Around 0.5% of missing episodes in Scotland have a fatal outcome.

Key facts – about missing people in Aberdeen in 2014

Figure 2: Key facts about missing people in Aberdeen in 2014

- There were 1120 recorded missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014.
- In 41% of missing episodes, the person missing was directly traced by Police search and investigation.
- 5 adults reported missing concluded with a fatal outcome.
- Over 99% of missing episodes in Aberdeen concluded with the missing person being traced safe and well.
- Missing person reports on average account for 1.4% of daily incidents, but investigations can be resource intensive.
- The 1120 incidents related to 584 different people.
- 41% of episodes were people reported missing on 2 or more occasions.
- One child was reported missing from a children's home on 45 seperate occasions.
- 10 children from children's homes accounted for 290 missing episodes or 25% of all missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014.
- 14% of all missing episodes related to hospital settings.
- 41% of all missing episodes related to children aged 12 to 15 years.

Key findings

- Police Scotland receives around 37,000 calls each year which start as missing persons. Around 32,000 of these initial calls become confirmed as missing person episodes. However, the current absence of a national ICT solution means that Police Scotland would require significant levels of manual data analysis to know how many people these 32,000 episodes relate to.

- In fiscal year 2013/14 Police Scotland recorded 36,473 missing incidents and 32,056 of these were confirmed as missing episodes. In fiscal year 2014/15 Police Scotland recorded 39,926 missing incidents and 35,271 of these were confirmed as missing episodes.

- Ten children from children's homes in Aberdeen accounted for 290 missing episodes and 25% of all missing episodes in Aberdeen City in 2014.

- Police Scotland estimates the cost of missing person investigations as £30m to £80m each year. However, there is a key knowledge gap in Scotland about the activity based costs to policing and the actual cost to policing and other agencies is unknown.

- Aberdeen City Division has developed a detailed missing person tactical assessment document which we endorse as effective practice.

- The appointment of a single executive lead for missing persons and a dedicated superintendent (SMPC) has strengthened national leadership and governance arrangements. The strategic direction of travel is good but there are still more improvements identified by Police Scotland to be fully implemented.

- There is strong leadership and governance and effective command over missing person investigations in Aberdeen City Division and reports of missing people are being properly investigated in Aberdeen.

- Service users gave largely positive feedback about their experiences of local policing delivery around missing person investigations in Aberdeen.

- Service users felt that local protocols with the police work well in Aberdeen City Division. They feel that it is important that there is sufficient flexibility for local solutions to be negotiated and agreed within broad national parameters.

- Service users had overwhelmingly positive experiences of operational policing delivery in Aberdeen, but some spoke about police culture and felt that some staff and officers on occasion saw regular missing people as a problem rather than as vulnerable people at risk.

- Reports of missing people are being properly recorded on the initial incident recording system in Aberdeen City Division. In a small number of cases, some of this data is not subsequently replicated onto the local missing person management database.

- Police Scotland has created more equal access to specialist support and has enhanced national capacity around missing person search and investigation. In high risk cases, this includes expert advice on investigative options around social media, the internet and other forms of digital communication.

- The proposed national Police Scotland i6 technology solution has a missing person element which should provide better national visibility and access to all missing person records with significantly enhanced management information and analysis opportunities.

- The new National Child Abuse and Investigation Unit (NCAIU) has been established in line with Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and is strengthening child protection measures including those for children who go missing.

- Police Scotland has not issued policy guidance to officers on when a vulnerable person concern form should be submitted in respect of missing people. This has led to confusion amongst officers and has resulted in different divisional approaches across Scotland.

- The level of concern referrals to partners made by the police following missing people episodes in Aberdeen was entirely appropriate to and consistent with the levels of threat, risk and harm in individual missing person records that we examined in Aberdeen.

- Whilst there is strong information-sharing between agencies in Aberdeen about individual missing episodes on a case-by-case basis, the consolidated information from these various partnership records is not routinely collated and analysed for patterns of behaviour or emerging intelligence across different groups or communities. There is therefore a need for improved sharing of information and intelligence between local agencies about children and vulnerable adults who go missing.

- There is no common partnership definition in Scotland for what constitutes a missing person and the lack of a single multi-agency definition makes the subject matter difficult to define and measure.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Aberdeen City Division should share the findings from its recently developed missing person tactical assessment with community planning partners in Aberdeen and in particular child and adult protection committees.

Recommendation 2

Police Scotland should work with the Scottish Government Missing Person Steering Group to develop common partnership definitions for missing people that can be agreed and adopted by multi-agency partners across Scotland.

Recommendation 3

Police Scotland should ensure greater consistency between internal and external management information reports on missing people by drawing source data from final incident closing codes on command and control systems.

Recommendation 4

Aberdeen City Division should work with Contact, Command and Control Division to introduce processes to ensure that data and information about missing persons is properly recorded on both STORM and the CrimeFile missing person system to achieve greater accuracy and reconciliation of data between both systems.

Recommendation 5

Police Scotland should provide clearer guidance to officers on the establishment of a single point of contact for the relatives or guardians of missing people.

Recommendation 6

Aberdeen City Division should put local arrangements in place to ensure that return home interviews (in addition to safe and well checks) are conducted by investigating officers for all missing people including adults in accordance with the provisions set out in the Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure.

Recommendation 7

Aberdeen City Division should conduct a review of the Return Home Welfare Interview (RHWI) function in light of the Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure and new Missing Person Operational Co-ordinator post to ensure that an equitable service is available when the dedicated RHWI officer is not available due to rest days or annual leave.

Recommendation 8

Police Scotland should issue policy guidance to staff on the circumstances under which a reported missing person should result in a vulnerable person database entry.

Recommendation 9

Police Scotland should conduct a review of staffing within the National Missing Person Unit to ensure that it has sufficient capacity to administer the national long-term missing person database, conduct national investigative reviews and support the ongoing improvement agenda around missing person investigations.

Recommendation 10

Police Scotland should ensure that all divisions develop missing person tactical assessments at local authority level to share with local community planning partners including child and adult protection committees.

Recommendation 11

Police Scotland should work with local authorities and local child and adult protection committees in developing more routine analysis and sharing of data about missing people to inform shared partnership tactical assessments.

Effective Practice Recognition

HMICS endorses the missing person tactical assessment produced by Aberdeen City Division as effective practice. We would encourage the sharing of this product with membership of the Police Scotland strategic and tactical missing person forums so that this effective practice can be disseminated throughout Police Scotland.

Background and methodology

Background

1. Official data on missing persons in the UK is collated by the National Crime Agency Missing Persons Bureau (NCA MPB). This data shows that approximately 190,000 people go missing each year in the UK.[8] The number of missing episodes recorded on UK police command and control systems in 2012/13 was 306,118[9] and there were 32,799 recorded episodes in Scotland which is equivalent to 6.2 episodes per 1,000 of population.[10] This is higher than the average figure for the rest of the UK which was 5.0 episodes per 1,000 of population.[11] The number of episodes of missing people recorded by the police will always be significantly higher than the actual number of individuals reported missing in any given year as some of those people will be reported missing on multiple occasions.[12]

2. Children and young people 18 years and under make up 64% of the missing episodes in the UK and children in the 15-17 age group make up 35% of that total. The UK data also shows that 15% of the total number of adults and children reported missing are from care settings with children's homes and hospitals featuring prominently as repeat locations. Children in care are three times more likely to go missing from their home than children who are not in care[13] and various toolkits exist to help agencies protect those children.[14] However, due to the unreliability of wider UK data it is likely that the true scale of the problem is not fully understood.[15]

3. 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.[16] 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[17]

---

[8] Missing Persons Data Analysis 2012/13, NCA Missing Persons Bureau: 2014 http://missingpersons.police.uk/en/resources/missing-persons-data-analysis-2012-13.
[9] Source: NCA UK Missing Persons Bureau Data Analysis: http://www.missingpersons.police.uk/.
[10] These statistics pre-date the establishment of Police Scotland.
[11] The data provided to the NCA by individual forces suggests that Scotland has a higher then UK average of recorded missing episodes. However, this may equally be explainable by different recording and counting conventions within individual forces in other parts of the UK.
[12] 38% of missing episodes in the UK in 2012/13 were repeat episodes: Source NCA.
[13] Data from End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT); www.ecpat.org.uk.
[14] See for example The Children's Society 'Young runaways' toolkit: http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources/protecting-young-runaways.
[15] Missing Children: report by Ofsted: February 2013.
[16] The absence of national strategy in Scotland in relation to tackling child sexual exploitation has also been highlighted. Public Petitions Committee, 1st 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.
[17] Smeaton, E. (2013) *'Running from hate to what you think is love: The relationship between running away and child sexual exploitation'.*

and lack of appropriate action by the police can deter other professionals from reporting in the future.[18] Such issues require a multi-agency framework and response. In Scotland, this has led to the publication of Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) published in November 2014.[19]

4.   The Scottish Government has also convened a National Missing Persons Steering Group with its partners to oversee the development of a National Missing Persons Strategy. It is envisaged that the Strategy and an underpinning Action Plan will be published in early 2016. 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. Other emerging issues for the UK include the recent phenomenon of unaccompanied migrant children going missing from care establishments into trafficking networks, and in England and Wales this has led to recent statutory guidance to local authorities.[20]

5.   A person going missing should always be regarded as an indicator of other issues. Such episodes 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 episodes. 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.

6.   Following the creation of Police Scotland, significant effort was initiated by the service to improve the approach to missing person investigations. For these reasons, we decided that it would be a timely opportunity to examine and inspect the new investigative approach to missing persons in Aberdeen City Division as part of our ongoing programme of divisional inspections under out **Local Policing+ programme.**

7.   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 missing person investigation to the police in the UK is £1325 - £2415.[21] 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.[22] Based on 32,000 missing episode reports to the police in Scotland each year, the academic data would support an indicative calculation that the cost to Police Scotland of managing missing person

---

[18] NSPCC Scotland, written submission to Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee on tackling child sexual exploitation in Scotland.

[19] Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation, Scottish Government 2014: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00463120.pdf.

[20] Statutory guidance for local authorities on the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking and trafficked children, Department for Education: 2014.https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330787/Care_of_unaccompanied_and_trafficked_children.pdf.

[21] 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/.

[22] Geographies of missing people: processes, experiences, responses: Scottish Institute of Policing Research: http://www.geographiesofmissingpeople.org.uk/downloads/Stevenson-et-al.pdf.

enquiries each year could be somewhere in a range from £43 million to £80 million, which would be equivalent to notional expenditure between 3% and 5% of the annual policing budget. However, this is an estimate only and the actual costs to policing and other agencies in Scotland are unknown.

Methodology

8.   Our methodological approach to this inspection was to explore the six overarching themes from our HMICS inspection framework against the UK policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for the management, recording and investigation of missing persons established by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the College of Policing.[23] On pages 20-21 of our 2014 Review of the Standing Authority for Armed Response Vehicles, we explained how Police Scotland engages with the College of Policing on a voluntary rather than statutory basis and made a recommendation that Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority should engage with the College of Policing to explore opportunities for more formal relationships. This recommendation still stands and although the Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure for missing person investigations draws practice advice from the APP, we would reiterate the need for robust relationships between Police Scotland, ACPO and the College of Policing.[24]

9.   The 2010 guidance is currently being refreshed by the College of Policing but the investigative cycle is illustrated by the following:

Figure 3: Missing person investigative cycle (ACPO/College of Policing)

---
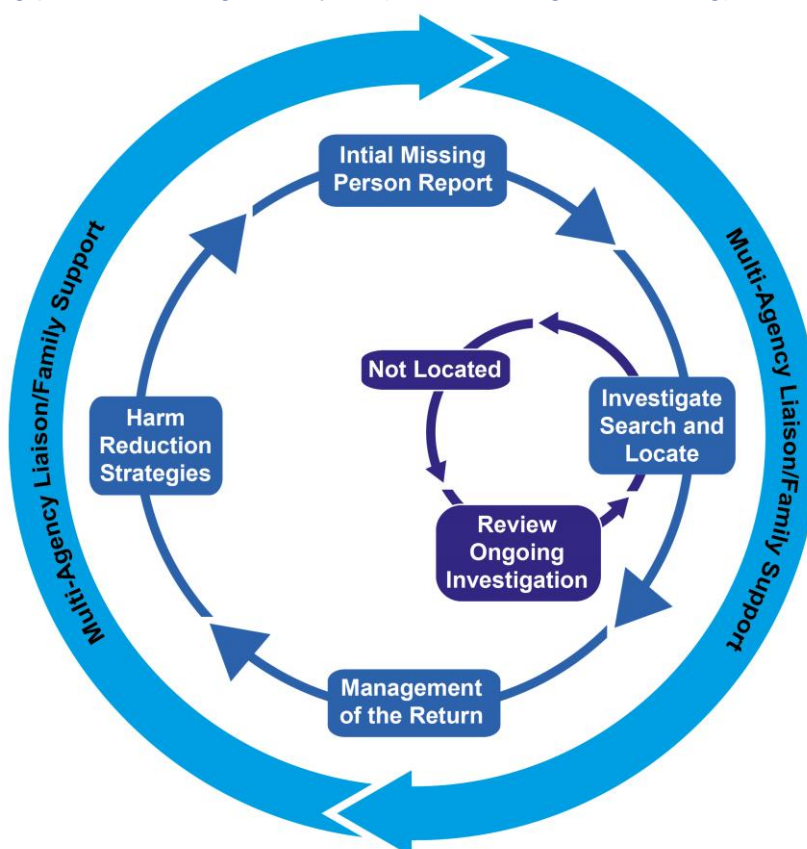
[23] Guidance on the management, recording and investigation of missing persons, Second Edition, 2010: ACPO http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2011/201103CRIIMP02.pdf.

[24] On 01 April 2015, ACPO was dissolved and superseded by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in England and Wales. However, we reference ACPO in this report due to our inspection work pre-dating the establishment of the NPCC.

10.   This led to the determination of five key research questions to guide our inspection activity:

   ■   Are missing person reports being **recorded** properly in Aberdeen City Division, and what is the nature and extent of missing people reported to the police?

   ■   Are there effective command **oversight, leadership and effective governance** arrangements?

   ■   Are **investigations** into missing persons being conducted properly in Aberdeen City Division in accordance with United Kingdom professional practice advice and in line with approved Police Scotland policies and procedure?

   ■   Is the **return** of missing persons being effectively managed in Aberdeen City 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 **harm reduction?**

11.   Whilst our inspection was in Aberdeen City Division, we have also made a broader assessment and have examined national oversight of missing person investigations within Police Scotland. As part of this, we have explored all aspects of the investigative cycle from initial reporting through to harm reduction strategies and working with other agencies.

12.   The findings from our inspection and the following chapters are structured to align with these five key research questions. More detailed information on our inspection methodology can be found in the **Terms of Reference** for this missing person inspection.[25]

13.   In conducting this inspection, we were mindful that the Scottish Government had set three objectives for police reform: (i) to protect and improve local services, (ii) to create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity, and (iii) to strengthen the connection between police services and communities.[26] We took the opportunity to explore the extent to which these policy objectives had been achieved during our inspection work on missing persons.

14.   For ease of presentation, we will discuss the national leadership and governance question first as it is the particular improvements and developments in this area which set the tone for much that follows in our inspection report. In each of the following sections we will firstly set the national context under each theme before discussing the specifics of what we found in Aberdeen City Division relative to the broader national context. For ease of reference, a glossary of terms is also included as Appendix 'C' to this inspection report.

15.   All data presented in this report was verified as being accurate at the point of our inspection activity and our report was circulated for factual accuracy checking amongst key stakeholders prior to publication.

---

[25] Terms of Reference published on HMICS website, 24 January 2014 http://www.hmics.org/publications/hmics-lp-missing-persons-terms-reference-january-2015
[26] Scottish Parliament, Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill: Policy Memorandum 2012:
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Police%20and%20Fire%20Reform%20(Scotland)%20Bill/Policy_Memo.pdf.

Leadership and governance

National leadership and governance

16. Police Scotland was formally established on 01 April 2013 and at the time of our inspection the service comprised of 17,254 full-time equivalent police officers.[27] The Chief Constable is supported by a command team of four Deputy Chief Constables, seven Assistant Chief Constables, four Directors of Service and a Head of Strategic Engagement.

17. The national policing landscape comprises of 14 local policing divisions, each headed by a divisional commander at the rank of chief superintendent whose role is to ensure that local policing in each area is responsive, accountable and tailored to meet local needs. Each division includes response officers, community officers, local crime investigation, road policing, local intelligence and public protection units. This geographical structure is shown in **Appendix 'A'** to this report.

18. Complementing local policing are a number of specialist divisions including Specialist Crime Division (SCD) and Operational Support Division (OSD) both of which fall under the command of the Deputy Chief Constable Crime and Operational Support. SCD provides investigative functions across Scotland including major crime, public protection, divisional crime, organised crime, counter-terrorism, intelligence and safer communities. OSD provides a range of support services such as search,firearms, air support, road policing, mounted branch, marine unit, tactical support units, dog section, mountain rescue and civil contingencies. In addition, police control rooms and service centres which take the 101 non-emergency calls to the police are co-ordinated through a specialist Contact, Command and Control (C3) Division. There are also Custody and Criminal Justice Divisions.

19. With the creation of a single service, it became apparent that Police Scotland had inherited a complex and divergent approach to the management of missing person investigations across Scotland. This included eight different systems of recording reports of missing persons, differences in risk assessment tools, standard operating procedures and processes which had largely been designed around legacy force policies, practices and ICT capabilities. This meant that there was no single national consolidated picture of the true nature, extent and impact of missing across Scotland beyond basic episode recording data pointing to around 32,000 missing episode reports each year.

20. This lack of national consistency in approach was compounded by a number of additional factors including the scale of missing people in Scotland, the absence of a national ICT solution for missing persons, and the complexity of the various geographical, causal and consequence factors around missing which had cut across all geographical and functional areas within the new Police Scotland. In the first few months of the new national service, the management of a small number of missing person investigations had been referred by Police Scotland to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) where independent review had highlighted the need for significant improvement in a number of areas relevant to the

---

[27] Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics Scotland, Scottish Government: February 2015 http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PublicationPoliceStrength/POQS2014Q4.

management of investigations. Further details of these individual reviews may be found on the PIRC website.[28]

21.	During our national assessment, we found that protecting vulnerable people such as those who go missing was one of four strategic priorities for Police Scotland in the 2014 to 2015 Strategic Police Plan as illustrated by the following diagram:

Figure 4: Police Scotland strategic police plan priorities 2014/15

22.	All of these factors had led to an early decision by the Chief Constable to assign a single national executive lead for missing persons to energise, standardise and improve the effectiveness of missing person investigation and management throughout Scotland. This led to the appointment of the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) West as the executive lead for missing persons, and in turn to the appointment in early 2014 of a superintendent in the dedicated role of Strategic Missing Person Co-ordinator (SMPC) and the establishment of a small National Missing Person Unit to help drive the improvement agenda.

23.	Internally, this led to the establishment of a National Missing Person Strategy Group chaired by the ACC and with widespread membership throughout the Force. This group focused on how the police respond to missing person reports and investigations and also considers prevention, protection and support. During our inspection we were able to observe at one of these meetings and it was evident from those observations and our wider scrutiny that strong and effective leadership and governance arrangements had been established at a national level. This strategic focus has delivered the first ever national missing person strategic assessment document for Scotland which has began to highlight the true scale and nature of missing person reports made to the police in Scotland.

[28] http://www.pirc.scotland.gov.uk/

24. Externally, the Scottish Government Director of Safer Communities chairs a Scotland Government Missing Person Steering Group, and beneath this sits a Scottish Government Missing Person Working Group. The Steering Group, led by Scottish Government and including Police Scotland, is overseeing the development of a National Missing Persons Strategy for Scotland, the aim of which is to reduce the harm caused by 'missing' in Scotland. The focus will be on four main objectives, around prevention, appropriate response to incidents, support for missing people and their families, and protection of vulnerable people. We will discuss this work in more detail under the harm reduction strategies section.

25. Beneath the Police Scotland National Missing Person Strategy Group sits a National Missing Person Tactical Group with a wide network of chief inspectors designated as Missing Person Tactical Co-ordinators representing divisions and specialist functions. This forum has served as a conduit for the development of a range of initiatives that have enhanced national governance arrangements. The many improvements driven through this group include:

   ■ The missing person strategic assessment document
   ■ Identifying the need for local divisional missing person tactical assessments
   ■ Ongoing refresh of the Police Scotland missing person standard operating procedure which has delivered a single policy approach to police missing person investigations throughout Scotland
   ■ A single national risk-assessment tool and aide-memoire card for officers
   ■ The planned delivery of the missing person element within the new i6 technology solution
   ■ The delivery of a national e-learning module on missing persons
   ■ The delivery of external training for, and from, key partners
   ■ Internal divisional capability assessments (conducted by National Missing Person Unit)
   ■ National investigative case reviews (conducted by National Missing Person Unit)
   ■ Internal Improvement Plan and Lessons Learned Log

26. These developments have significantly improved missing person investigations. However it was also clear that our inspection came at a point in a significant programme of change where more improvements identified by Police Scotland have still to be implemented. For example, Police Scotland has established a network of Missing Person Operational Co-ordinators for the 14 divisions situated within the Public Protection Unit (PPU) hubs throughout Scotland.[29] This included Aberdeen City Division where the operational co-ordinator post was still in the process of being established when we commenced our formal inspection activities.

---

[29] Although there are 14 police divisions in Scotland, there are 13 public protection hubs as Aberdeen City Division and Aberdeenshire Division have a shared hub.

27. We conclude that the early decision to appoint an executive lead for missing persons and the appointment of a dedicated SMPC has led to a greater consistency and has improved national leadership and governance around missing person investigations throughout Scotland. We also found that the new governance arrangements have created more equal access to specialist support and national capacity. We will discuss this aspect in more detail under the section of this report on investigation and search.

28. Our assessment is supported by internal and external interviews where we found widespread recognition for the work of the SMPC both in accentuating the importance of missing, and in driving a host of improvements aimed at harm and risk reduction and improved outcomes for vulnerable people. Our assessment is further validated by the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner for Scotland (PIRC) who has communicated formally with us to confirm that she is satisfied that Police Scotland has responded to previous independent reviews and has improved its strategic approach to missing person investigations. The following structural map shows the strategic, tactical and operational leadership and governance arrangements for missing person management within Police Scotland.

Figure 5: Strategic, tactical and operational missing person structure map
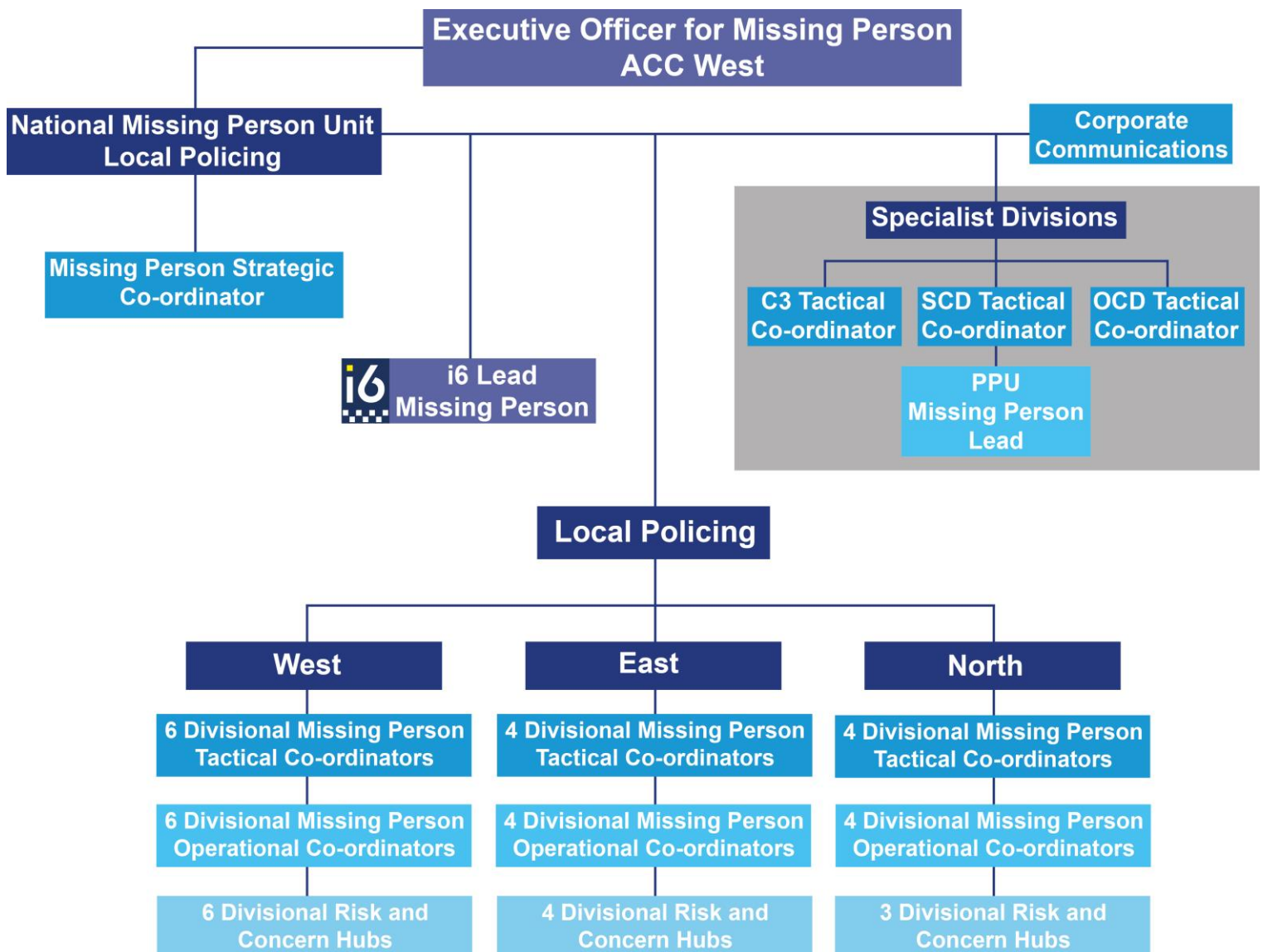
Leadership and governance in Aberdeen City Division

29.   As with the national context, we found strong and effective leadership and governance arrangements in place within Aberdeen City Division. In particular we found that the executive led improvement agenda around missing person investigation and management had been embraced by the entire local command team who were actively providing support to the work of the local chief inspector designated as Tactical Missing Person Co-ordinator, alongside his other duties.

30.   We observed at a Divisional Missing Person Tactical Group chaired by this chief inspector and meeting was attended by a range of community planning partners in Aberdeen including representatives from the NHS and children's and adults services sectors. We also noted that the divisional commander and his entire command team were present at this forum and that all played an active part making valuable contributions to the many and complex matters under debate.

31.   In relation to governance and leadership over reported missing people, we noted that missing persons were a standing item on the daily command team morning meeting and that the divisional commander was actively involved in supporting, questioning and establishing clear investigative parameters around ongoing investigations. We also found that the divisional commander had commissioned a small number of internal reviews where the superintendent SMPC for Police Scotland had completed peer reviews offering further investigative options based on the knowledge and expertise built up in his new national role.

32.   Just prior to our inspection in Aberdeen City Division, the Police Scotland National Missing Person Unit had conducted a missing person capability assessment in Aberdeen and had provided the division with a report outlining some areas for development to ensure full compliance with the new Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for missing persons. In terms of leadership and governance, we noted that the recommendations from this internal self-assessment had been fully accepted by the local command team and that an improvement plan had been put in place to address a small number of recommendations. We found strong evidence of synergy between national and local leadership and governance.

33.   In late 2014, the Tactical Missing Person Co-ordinator commissioned some research through the local community policing analysts to develop a comprehensive tactical assessment for Aberdeen to include a profile of missing episodes and people in the City for the calendar year 2014.

34.   This product was developed by the Analyst Co-ordinator and necessitated a high level of manual data extraction and analysis due to the management information and data mining limitations within legacy ICT systems. A copy of this tactical assessment was made available to HMICS for our inspection work in Aberdeen City Division and we found the document to be ground-breaking in terms of the depth and quality of data analysis. We also noted that this work had intentionally been created to align to the national data sets published for 2012/13 by the National Crime Agency Missing Persons Bureau in 2014. This means that Police Scotland are improving management information in a way that will better inform local, national and United Kingdom understanding. As such, we acknowledge the effective local leadership in commissioning this product and as this is the most comprehensive missing person tactical assessment that we have seen during our Scotland and United Kingdom research we endorse this product in terms of its broader contributions to effective emerging practice.

35. Although this Police Scotland document is 'restricted' on the grounds of sensitive data and intelligence, its production provides absolute clarity on the known nature and extent of reported missing episodes in Aberdeen and should provide the basis for the sharing of aggregated data and information with community planning partners in Aberdeen. In particular we think that it will be of value to child and adult protection committees as it highlights vulnerable locations, issues and people, and in doing so, points towards some potential partnership opportunities to further reduce harm, risk and negative outcomes for children and vulnerable adults.

Effective Practice Recognition

HMICS endorses the missing person tactical assessment produced by Aberdeen City Division as effective practice. We would encourage the sharing of this product with membership of the Police Scotland strategic and tactical missing person forums so that this effective practice can be disseminated throughout Police Scotland.

Recommendation 1

Aberdeen City Division should share the findings from its recently developed missing person tactical assessment with community planning partners in Aberdeen and in particular child and adult protection committees.

36. In summarising our initial findings on leadership and governance we conclude that effective command oversight arrangements have been established by Police Scotland at strategic and tactical levels and we note that there is real synergy between the national and local leadership and governance arrangements. However, we acknowledge that our inspection fell at a point in the improvement journey where some of the governance arrangements at an operational level are far less mature in Aberdeen. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the leadership around missing person investigations under Police Scotland and whilst more improvements identified by Police Scotland have yet to be implemented, we endorse the effectiveness of the current strategic direction of travel.

Reporting and recording

National definitions

37. The Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) provides front line operational officers, tactical supervisors and strategic managers with guidance and direction around the management of all missing person investigations. The SOP covers all missing, wanted and found persons including children who abscond from residential care and adults who escape from custody and aims to provide an appropriate graded response with ongoing ownership, roles and responsibilities. For the purposes of missing person investigation management, Police Scotland uses two categories including 'Concern for Person' and 'Missing Person'.

38. A **Concern for Person** is defined by Police Scotland as a person, whose whereabouts are **known or believed known** and there are concerns of risk of harm to the individual.

39. **A Missing Person** is defined as anyone whose **whereabouts is unknown** and:

   ■ Where the circumstances are out of character; or

   ■ The context suggests the person may be subject to crime; or

   ■ The person is at risk of harm to themselves or another.

40. The definition of 'missing person' used by Police Scotland is almost identical to that advocated by ACPO and the College of Policing: *"Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another."*[30]

41. However, the use of the 'concern for person' category by Police Scotland differs from the approach in all other UK forces where the 'absent' category is used. Absent is defined by ACPO and the College of Policing as "A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be." The ACPO adoption of 'absent' came in April 2013 and stemmed from the joint Home Office and ACPO reducing bureaucracy programme.[31] It seeks to ensure that the police response to missing person reports is proportionate to the level of risk perceived in each case, as there was previously concern that sending police officers out to follow up all reports, regardless of the level of risk involved, may not be an efficient use of resources.

42. From interviews with senior officers we understand that the different approach in Scotland was due to concerns that the introduction of the 'absent' category in other parts of the UK had been criticised as being a demand reduction tool, and the need for the approach in Scotland to be articulated more around a harm reduction model. The term 'absent' is however being explored as a category for use by partners for looked after children and missing persons from hospitals. The use of absent in these circumstances is currently undergoing research by Police Scotland linked to a wider UK review of the absent category which we welcome.

---

[30] Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons. ACPO & College of Policing 2013: http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2013/201303-cba-int-guid-missing-persons.pdf.

[31] College of Policing, (2013), Risk, bureaucracy and missing persons: An evaluation of a new approach to the initial police response.

43. There are also differences between local agency perspectives of what 'missing' actually means. In care settings, young people are often failing to come back on time rather than being missing *per se,* in our work in Aberdeen we found that a young person answering their phone was a consistent factor in care staff not reporting them missing. As long as the home and the young person were communicating, staff said they would be unlikely to report it unless they thought that the child was at risk. By contrast, a young person not answering their phone was often a trigger for escalating the level of risk and reporting the young person missing. However, such circumstances would fulfil the 'concern for person' rather that missing person definition within the Police Scotland SOP.

44. This example is included to highlight the differences in qualitative and subjective assessments of what 'missing' actually means to different agencies as the lack of a single multi-agency definition also makes the subject matter difficult to define and measure. These delicate but important distinctions have implications for how missing people are to be understood in Scotland and it would therefore be helpful if common terminology could be agreed as part of the Scottish Government strategy and the development of national partnership agreements.

> **Recommendation 2**
>
> Police Scotland should work with the Scottish Government Missing Person Steering Group to develop common partnership definitions for missing people that can be agreed and adopted by multi-agency partners across Scotland.

National reporting

45. The Police Scotland SOP describes the various arrangements around initial reporting of missing people. This includes the arrangements to be followed regardless of whether the initial report is made to a local area service centre via the single national non-emergency 101 number, whether it comes in to a control room as a 999 call, or whether the report is made to a police officer or member of police staff at a police station. However, the national SOP also contains 31 pages of appendices to cater for the very different local recording arrangements across Scotland as highlighted in the earlier governance section of this report. This means that Police Scotland has very different ways of recording reported missing people throughout Scotland.

National recording

46. Reports of missing people are firstly recorded onto the local legacy incident recording system (command and control system) by Area Service Centre (ASC) staff. Police Scotland does not yet have a single national incident recording system and there are various different versions in use throughout Scotland.[32] In 2014, there were approximately 32,000 closed missing person episodes on the various incident recording systems from a total of 2,653,257 incidents indicating that missing persons account for around 1.2% of all incidents requiring a police response.[33]

---

[32] West area uses Storm, East uses Fife and Lothian and Borders versions of Storm, Tayside uses Captor, Highlands and Islands uses I-Cad, and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and Moray use legacy Grampian Storm.
[33] Source: Police Scotland C3 Division.

47.   Some legacy areas such as Aberdeen City Division also had a dedicated missing person technology solution for managing investigations whereas other areas initially relied on command and control or paper based systems. Police Scotland does not yet have a dedicated national ICT solution to assist with the effective management of missing person investigations. This means that Police Scotland currently has no means of accurately determining how many people are reported missing in Scotland each year and as a consequence also has no means of obtaining more granular data such as knowing how many children were reported missing without significant levels of manual analysis.

48.   During our inspection, we found that differing counting conventions had been applied in relation to internal and external management information reports connected with missing person episodes. For example, the *Police Scotland Management Information: Division Area Reports* published quarterly has placed information in the public domain based on initial incident opening codes. This was used in preference to closing codes so that ongoing open investigations would not skew the data. However, many missing person cases are initially reported as other things such as a concern for someone meaning that opening codes are an unreliable indicator. This meant that the external management information reports gave the impression that there were far fewer missing people in Aberdeen during 2014 than was actually the case. This contrasted significantly with internal performance reports where the counting conventions were more appropriately based on final incident codes.

49.   Therefore whilst both internal and external data sets were technically accurate, we found that the application of different counting conventions by Police Scotland for different types of management information reports about missing people was confusing. When publishing management information about missing people, it would be more appropriate for Police Scotland to draw the source data from final incident closing codes. This will result in more accurate published information about the number of missing episodes reported to the police, and will also ensure greater consistency between internal and external management information.

Recommendation 3

Police Scotland should ensure greater consistency between internal and external management information on missing people by drawing source data from final incident closing codes on command and control systems.

Future national ICT developments to assist missing person investigation

50.   In 2015, Police Scotland expects to take delivery and roll out a new national policing technology solution known as i6 which will include a bespoke element for missing person management.

51.   The product is in the final stages of development but has been designed to provide a fully searchable single national database of all information held about any person on the system whether related to them from missing person investigation or within the other integrated elements of i6, including Crime, Custody, Criminal Justice, Vulnerable Persons, Missing Persons and Lost and Found Property. This will include detailed descriptions, relationships, linked locations, risk assessments and images providing the fullest information possible to operational officers, enabling better informed decisions based on the fullest national information.

52.   All of this information will be searchable to produce management reports, for example if required it could run *ad hoc* search queries such as the following:

   ■   The numbers of high risk missing children from care homes, under the age of 14, in a specific area, over a timescale chosen.

   ■   The number of persons missing from medical care, with mental health concerns.

   ■   The number of missing persons of any ethnicity, of a particular age, as a result of forced marriage.

53. Police Scotland envisage that the i6 pilot will go live the week commencing 28th September 2015 in Renfrewshire and Inverclyde divisions ahead of a phased roll out across the rest of Scotland. Roll out will continue in the west divisions moving to the north early in 2016 prior to the concluding stage in autumn 2016 in the east. The system is currently the subject of rigorous testing prior to deployment for use on every desktop computer in Police Scotland. A comprehensive training plan is being developed, and it is understood that all police officers will attend a three day training course on the new national ICT solution.

54. i6 will provide a national system for the recording and co-ordination of missing person investigations replacing a variety of unconnected and less sophisticated legacy force systems. It is envisaged that i6 will be a significant step forward for Police Scotland and HMICS will monitor the implementation and assess the effectiveness of the new system post-delivery. At this stage, it is envisaged that i6 will provide;

- National visibility and access to all missing person episodes.

- Access to all legacy system missing person reports.

- Access to all data held for any person and also links to family, friends, and locations.

- Access to all previous risk assessments related to a missing person.

- The ability to re-use data held within the system to 'clone' new missing person investigations, dramatically reducing time spent 're keying' information.

- Integrated 'Investigation Plans' based on the risk level selected will present users with a comprehensive series of tasks expected to be carried out during an investigation.

- Alerts to users that a person is missing when they are brought into custody or details are input e.g. as a witness to a crime.

- The ability to task an officer anywhere in the country to undertake specific investigation, such as address checks. .

- Powerful analytical tools will, for the first time, be made available to frontline officers.

- Integration with Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping and Gazetteer will provide tools to define search areas on a map to help plan and manage searches.

Reporting and recording in Aberdeen City Division

55. In our published terms of reference for our inspection work in Aberdeen City Division we said that we would:

- Inspect the local command and control system to test reported incident-to-recorded missing person report compliance by looking at all STORM incidents closed as missing person for calendar year 2014 to achieve 100% confidence.

- Conduct an audit and inspection of all completed missing person reports on the Aberdeen CrimeFile Missing Person system from 01 October 2014 to 31 December 2014 to assess compliance with the recording of mandatory information as specified in the Police Scotland missing person SOP and aide memoire.

- Assess the effectiveness of managerial systems, quality control and risk management processes in place to oversee, manage and audit missing person investigations.

56. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and Moray Divisions currently use the CrimeFile Missing Person application for recording and managing all missing person cases. The service centre in Aberdeen will normally receive initial missing person calls from the public. The bespoke local arrangements for these divisions are contained within Appendix 'A' to the Police Scotland SOP.

57. The instructions for Aberdeen state that *'where a report of a missing person does not require immediate action, the Service Centre will create a STORM Incident and CrimeFile Missing Person Report, which will be cross-referenced. The Service Centre will immediately bring the STORM Incident to the attention of the Control Room by means of a telephone call. It should be noted the STORM Incident will only be used by Control Room staff during the early stages of most missing persons and to assist with resource management in some high risk cases. All missing person enquiries must be moved from STORM to CrimeFile as soon as is reasonably practical'*. (Police Scotland Missing Person SOP version 3.2: page 58)

58. The instruction goes on to *explain 'once the duty sergeant has control of the incident, all tasks and information pertaining to the incident must be recorded on CrimeFile. The STORM incident will be cross-referenced to the CrimeFile, but no further entries will be made on STORM'*. (Police Scotland Missing Person SOP version 3.2: page 59)

59. Therefore based on the Police Scotland SOP, there should be a direct correlation between the overall number of incidents on STORM closed as missing person and the number of missing person investigations recorded on the CrimeFile application database.

60. However, this was not the case and our analysis of the STORM Command and Control data indicated 1196 record closed as missing person incidents in Aberdeen for the calendar year 2014 but only 1120 records were found on the CrimeFile system. We found various reasons for the differences in these data sets and we also found a small number of data inaccuracies and anomalies. The most common factor was found to be circumstances where the person reported missing had been traced very quickly and prior to the creation of the CrimeFile record so were deemed not to have been technically 'missing', or alternatively where an operational sergeant did not agree with the initial call handlers interpretation determining that the initial incident report should instead constitute 'concern for' as opposed to 'missing'. In our view, these anomalies could have been resolved by discussion between operational and service centre supervisors and where necessary through re-classification of incident closing codes on STORM.

61. From our research we were satisfied that Aberdeen City Division are properly recording all instances of reported missing persons but we found that this was not always being done in a consistent way to ensure the reconciliation of data over both of the ICT systems in use. The consequence of this is a potentially confusing picture of apparently conflicting data sets which although not impacting on the management of individual cases, serves to undermine subsequent attempts at producing analytical products or management information based on consolidated data sets.

62.   Whilst Police Scotland are confident that the proposed i6 missing person system will interface automatically STORM, there is clearly an interim need for Aberdeen City Division to put systems in place to achieve greater accuracy and reconciliation between data on different systems.   As Aberdeen City Division responds to an average of three to four new missing person reports each day, this should easily be achievable.

> **Recommendation 4**
>
> Aberdeen City Division should work with Contact, Command and Control Division to introduce processes to ensure that data and information about missing persons is properly recorded on both STORM and the CrimeFile missing person system to achieve greater accuracy and reconciliation of data between both systems.

Service Users experiences of initial contact and reporting in Aberdeen

63.   As part of our inspection work in Aberdeen, we had commissioned research assistance from Children in Scotland, the Scottish Institute of Policing Research (SIPR) and the Care Inspectorate to obtain service user perspectives of working with the police in relation to missing people. This work involved engaging with children's services and NHS managers at locations known to generate the highest numbers of missing episodes in Aberdeen and engaging with a small number of children who had been missing.

64.   Whilst the feedback from service users was overwhelmingly positive, some had mixed experiences of initial contact when telephoning the police service centre in Aberdeen to report someone missing and felt that staff attitude was an occasional source of concern. We heard of instances when call handlers questioned the change in risk rating about a missing child and the decision was referred to a duty sergeant. Some respondents found this frustrating, feeling that their professional judgement was being questioned or that they were being seen as 'manipulating the system' to get the police to go and collect the missing child. Others welcomed the opportunity to have a professional discussion. Issues were usually resolved once the duty sergeant became involved in agreeing the next steps.

65.   Two issues concerning increased bureaucracy were mentioned during our interviews: A mental health staff member said they were often asked for a separate, formal risk assessment document for each person reported missing (as happens for missing children). The procedures are different for NHS patients, where the risk assessment forms part of the ongoing clinical assessment and is already recorded. They suggested that NHS staff found the request for any additional form filling frustrating as they just wanted to give the details over the phone and state the risk level.

66.   Staff members in children's homes complete a comprehensive missing person report whenever a child goes missing, as required in the local protocol with the police. The form is emailed or faxed to the local service centre. Recently, when officers attend to take follow up details, they have required staff to give out the same information again as was already submitted in the form to the local police service centre, this has been causing some frustration.

67. These comments were offered within the broader context of overwhelmingly positive views about the experience of working with the police in Aberdeen but it is understandable why these examples would be a source of frustration to service users and in particular where not addressed by local explanation. In this regard, we are mindful of the fact that the national rationalisation of police contact centres and control rooms is underway and that the local Aberdeen facilities are to be closed by Police Scotland in late 2015. This will see 101 non-emergency calls from Aberdeen being routed to Bilston near Edinburgh and the control room functions being transferred to Dundee.

68. It is important that those with responsibility for such re-modelling do so in a way that allows opportunities to address such concerns and to improve the service. Whilst we make no recommendation in this regard, we would encourage continued representation from C3 management at all divisional tactical missing person group meetings to ensure that such issues can be aired amongst partners with a view to enhancing synergy in local partnership working.

Analysis of recorded missing people in Aberdeen City Division for 2014

69. As previously noted, Aberdeen City Division has produced a comprehensive tactical assessment for Aberdeen to include a profile of missing episodes and people in the City for the calendar year 2014.

70. From our own audit and inspection activities, we are able to independently validate this analysis which summarises the recorded position in Aberdeen for 2014 as follows:

- There were 584 individuals reported missing and 1120 episodes

- The number of missing persons per 10,000 residents (5.1) is below the Scottish average (6.2)

- One child from a children's home was reported missing on 45 separate occasions

- 41% of episodes were people reported missing on more than one occasion

- 10 children from children's homes accounted for 290 missing episodes or 25% of the divisional total for 2014

- 41% of all missing episodes were children aged 12 to 15 years

- 14% of all episodes were from hospital settings

- 44% of all episodes in Aberdeen were from care, hospital and education settings

71.   The following chart illustrates a breakdown of recorded missing episodes for 2014 in Aberdeen by local community policing team area:

Figure 6: Chart showing recorded missing episodes for Aberdeen in 2014: Source Police Scotland

Community team area	Quarter of calendar year				Not recorded	Missing person records
	1	2	3	4		
Bucksburn	4	6	7	8	3	28
Bridge of Don	3	4	5	1	2	15
Tillydrone	3	10	3	11	3	30
Northfield	52	36	26	10	11	135
Mastrick	19	22	18	15	10	84
Kittybrewster	28	40	45	56	17	186
Seaton	27	22	13	27	8	97
Torry	15	15	18	14	8	70
Nigg	23	19	26	26	1	95
West End	9	11	28	56	6	110
Hazlehead	8	13	11	13	4	49
Rosemount	10	4	20	12	3	49
City Centre	10	10	12	5	2	39
Not recorded	14	7	12	26	74	133
Grand Total	**225**	**219**	**244**	**280**	**152**	**1,120**

72.   The above chart is shown as the following hot-spot map to assist readers in visualising that a high proportion of missing episodes come from repeat locations:[34]

Figure 7: Hot spot map showing recorded missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014: Source Police Scotland

---
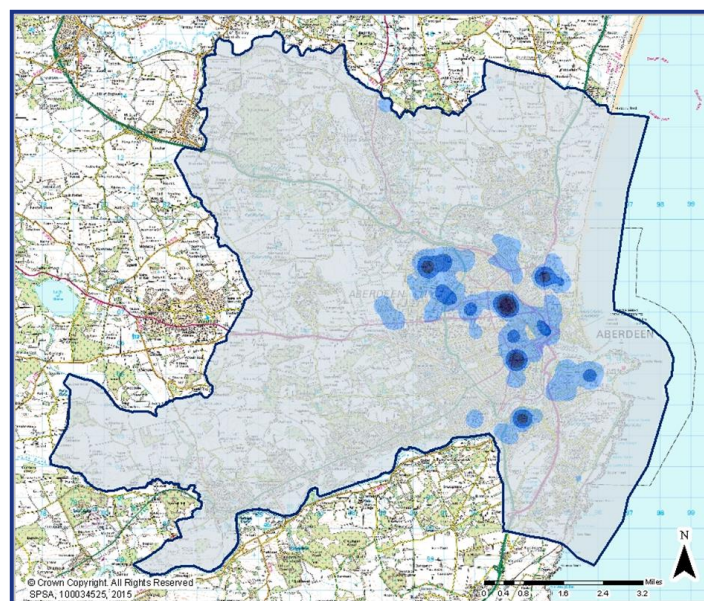
[34] We do not discuss the precise names and locations of children's homes, hospitals and care settings in the interests of the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

73.   In terms of the age groups and gender to which these missing episodes relate the analysis in Aberdeen shows that more males are reported missing than females in all age ranges. It also shows that male and female children in the 12 to 15 age group are reported missing almost twice as often as any other age range.

Figure 8: Age and gender graph for missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014: Source Police Scotland
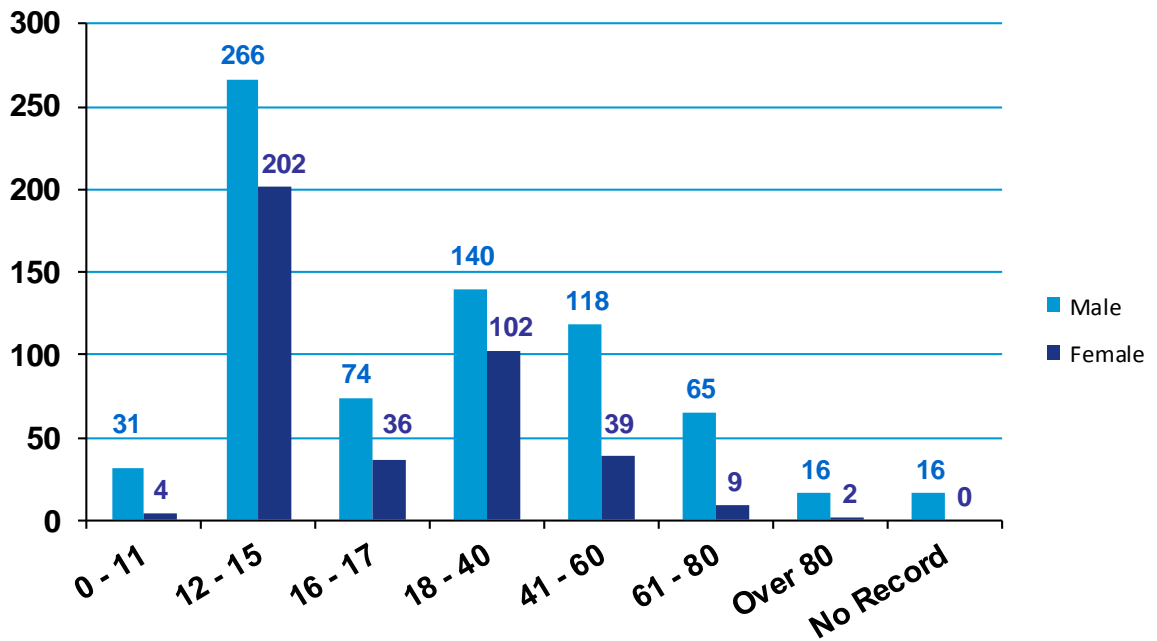
Investigation and search

National context

74. The structural map presented on page 18 illustrates the interface between local and national specialist functions and all of these have an important role to play in relation to the investigation and search for missing people.

75. The Police Scotland SOP is aligned to wider UK guidance around the management process for the investigation and search for missing people. As illustrated by Figure 3 on page 13, this process should be seen as a cycle of actions that are used in a problem-solving approach to missing person investigations. This process will help to improve the safeguarding issues for individuals and reduce the number of missing episodes.

76. Information that is collected from each missing episode must be recorded to provide an assessment of whether that individual has come to any harm and also to provide intelligence for future or current investigations. In the case of individuals who go missing repeatedly, information about where they went or who they were with on previous occasions can be useful. Information gathered on trends or patterns of missing persons can help to identify any number of harms including issues such as those vulnerable to child sexual exploitation, perpetrator networks, and a range of information and intelligence about victims and offenders. Search is an integral part of the investigative process; search and investigation should be seen as complimentary activities and the outcome of each assists the progress of the other.

National support to local investigations

77. During the national assessment aspect of our missing person inspection we interviewed a range of senior officers and practitioners within specialist divisions including SCD, OSD, C3, and the National Missing Person Unit which sits under local policing. From these various sessions we gathered evidence of more equal access to specialist national resources through the capacity and capability that arises from a single national force with unified command structures.

78. For example, the Police Scotland Communications and Investigation Unit (CIU), the Internet Investigations Unit (IIU) and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) were all found to be providing high levels of investigative support to high risk missing person cases that we examined in Aberdeen. This included the provision of expert advice on issues such as investigative options around social media. This provided enhanced levels of investigative support to local officers, some of whom had completed the Research of Open Source Internet and Emails (ROSIE) course and who had the skills set to conduct a more basic internet search to support a missing person investigation.

79. The National Missing Person Unit (NMPU) were found to be directly supporting investigations through national review processes including those in Aberdeen previously referred to in the earlier section of this report on leadership and governance. At the point of inspection, we found that the superintendent SMPC had conducted more than 30 investigative reviews to support local policing across Scotland.

80. The NMPU also maintains the national database for long-term missing persons in Scotland and this includes 600 long-term missing, 300 unidentified bodies and 65 body-parts dating back to 1950.[35] This data replicates that which is held on the HERMES system which is administered on behalf of the National Crime Agency UK Missing Person Bureau. The NCA MPB is the UK national point of contact for all missing person and unidentified body cases.

81. The national UK Missing Person DNA Database (MPDD) functions as a secondary database to the MPB case management system, HERMES, which contains the primary data relating to a missing person investigation or unidentified human remains. The unique reference number (HERMES number) generated by the HERMES system is used to link records between the MPB and the MPDD.

82. Whilst the ownership of current and historic missing person investigations lies within the local police divisions, there are additional arrangements in place for the Police Scotland National Homicide and Review Team to review any cases where it is suspected that the missing person may have become a victim of crime. This includes oversight of long-term missing cases, unidentified bodies and body parts where criminality is suspected. During our national assessment work we learned of specific examples of national reviews that had enhanced investigative options through for example the identification of unexplored forensic opportunities.

Child sexual exploitation

83. In our terms of reference for this inspection we said that as part of the national assessment work we would examine 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.

84. During our national assessment we spoke with senior managers in the new National Child Abuse Investigation Unit (NCAIU) which operates a hub and spoke model across Scotland including staff in Aberdeen where we conducted our inspection. Police Scotland's 2014/15 annual plan outlined the intention to set up a new National Child Abuse Investigation Unit and at the point of our inspection the final set-up phase for the West hub was underway.

85. Child abuse investigations have become increasingly more complex, requiring highly trained investigators with a range of specialist skills. There are a number of areas of child abuse that previously were largely unrecognised or under reported, such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or abuse within institutions, much of which is non-recent. Police Scotland has systems and processes in place for proactive policing of the internet around issues such as child exploitation and on-line protection and has

---

[35] Over 300 long-term missing person enquiries are considered archived. Archiving occurs based on a number of factors but includes, for example, where the person would have reached an age where they would no longer reasonably expected to still be alive or where persons have believed to have succumbed to maritime incidents and in the absence of any substantive development there are no reasonable avenues for further investigation.

established a specific CSE marker on the Interim Vulnerable Person Database (IVPD) system. Staff training and awareness training on CSE continues with plans for a specific footprint within probationer training at the Scottish Police College.

86. The value of a local approach to child protection has been recognised by the Scottish Government and is embedded in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. Therefore, it is important to highlight that the establishment of the NCAIU will add real investigative value to local policing divisions who will continue to retain responsibility and accountability for the delivery of child protection through devolved inter-agency arrangements within their geographical and local authority boundaries.

87. As such, the NCAIU has been modelled to deliver an enhanced specialist response that supports local policing Public Protection Units by providing dedicated specialist investigative resources, including Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs), who will lead and/or provide assistance locally. On specific cases, it also provides a real opportunity to maximise the efficient use of other national specialist investigatory units by co-locating alongside officers from the National Rape Task Force and Major Investigation Teams at certain locations. We conclude that the new NCAIU is already strengthening child protection measures in Scotland including those for children who go missing.

National support to local search

88. During our initial fieldwork in Aberdeen City Division, we had examined every page of every missing person record for the last quarter of 2014. From those investigative logs we noted numerous examples of specialist OSD resources being deployed in Aberdeen to assist in search activity for missing persons. This included Police Search Advisors (POLSA[36]), Operational Support Units (OSU) Dog Section, Marine and Dive Unit and Air Support.

89. The following **sanitised** case study from a high-risk missing person investigation in Aberdeen in 2014 demonstrates this national support:

> ### Case Study
>
> In the autumn of 2014 an adult was reported missing to the police in Aberdeen. The subject had a complicated medical and social history and the circumstances of disappearance gave rise to serious concern. The subject was treated as high-risk from the outset and specialist search resources were deployed. This included OSU officers from Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Edinburgh. Dog section resources from Aberdeen and Glasgow, including victim recovery (VR) dogs and Air Support via the Police Scotland Helicopter. The Divisional Commander subsequently requested an independent review of progress and this was conducted by the SMPC. Investigations continued until the recovery of a body from the North Sea in the spring of 2015.

90. This sanitised case study illustrates a large scale investigation where specialist national assets were deployed to assist local policing in Aberdeen. Under legacy arrangements, Grampian Police did not have VR dogs or Air Support and would have relied on mutual aid being available from a larger force. The ability to immediately draw in such specialist support from other parts of Scotland also lessens the operation impact on local community policing resources.

---

[36] Police Search advisors are trained to national standards and licensed by the College of Policing.

91.   In order to assess the scale of national support to local search we obtained specialist deployment activity data from Operational Support Division. The data relates to the number of individual searches by specialism for missing persons. As this is self-report data, it is important to note that these totals include instances were more than one specialism will have been deployed to the same search. Therefore the data is presented simply as a general indicator of the level of support being supplied to local missing person searches by national assets:

Figure 9: Table showing number of individual missing persons searches by OSD function

| Unit	North	East	West	Total 2014/15 year to date to 28.2.15
Dog Section	1293	1511	450	3254
Operational Support Unit	172	393	124	689
Air Support Unit	40	94	266	400
Dive and Marine Unit	96	22	35	153

Investigation and search in Aberdeen City Division

92.   From our inspection of missing person investigative records in Aberdeen and our related inspection activity we found strong evidence to support the conclusion that investigations and search were being well conducted. Officers we interviewed had a thorough knowledge of the detail contained within the Police Scotland SOP relative to investigation and search and there was widespread acclaim for the aide-memoire card produced by the National Missing Person Unit and an associated e-learning package which officer told us they found very useful.

93.   It was clear to us that Aberdeen based officers treat missing person investigations as a 'significant' priority. The lessons learnt from a high profile missing child investigation in 1997 and the priority given to missing persons by legacy Grampian Police remain at the forefront of current officer thinking. The Senior Management Team fully understands the need to get their oversight right and could evidence early command structures being consistently implemented. They also fully understood the need for proportionate resource deployment and the availability of specialist regional and national resources.

94.	All officers that we interviewed had a good understanding of the role of the NMPU which was largely due to the Commanders and Tactical Missing Person Co-ordinators drive for professionalism around this agenda. As previously noted the Commander had made the point of attending several of the Divisional Missing Person Tactical Group meetings which has helped to reinforce how important this agenda is to the division.

95.	We found that there were regular updates and discussions around missing persons at daily tasking and co-ordinating meetings and that criminal investigations department (CID) oversight and leadership was present on all high risk investigations. We also found that missing persons were a regular feature in daily intelligence briefings to officers. This ensured strong and effective command oversight over all investigations. With regard to the duration of investigations, we found that 13.8% of missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014 were concluded within one hour and 54.4% within sixteen hours. Very few missing episodes in percentage terms went beyond two days as indicated by the following:
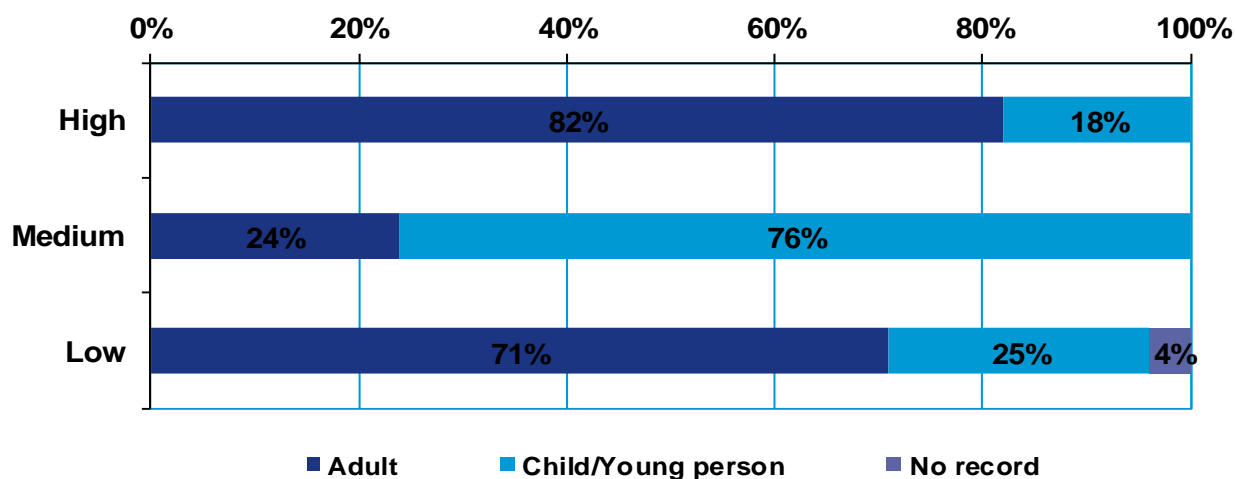
Figure 10:   Graph showing the duration of missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014: Source Police Scotland

35
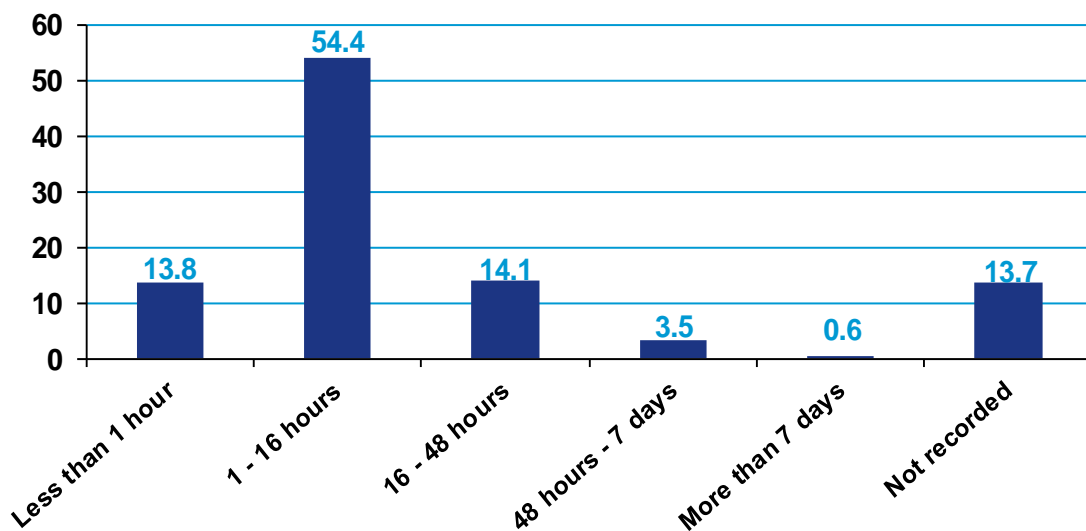
96. Analysis of the risk assessment categories for missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014 showed that the majority of high and low risk cases were adults, whereas the majority of medium risk cases were children:

Figure 11: Risk categories of missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014: Source Police Scotland

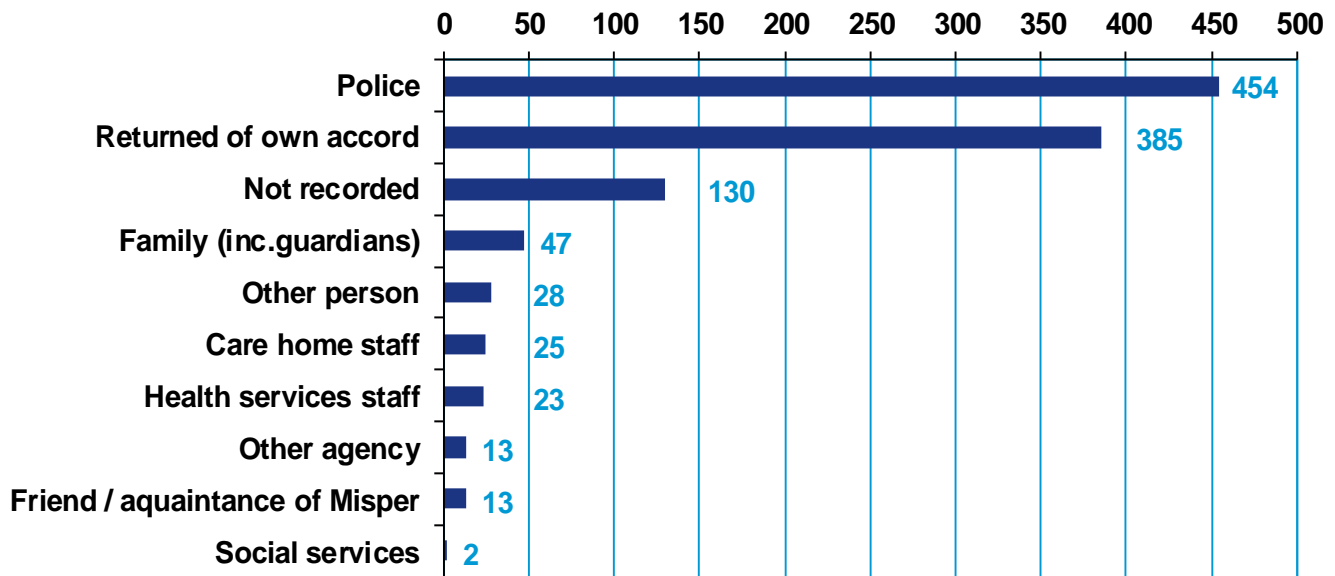| Risk	Adult	Child/Young person	No record
High	82%	18%	
Medium	24%	76%	
Low	71%	25%	4%

■ Adult ■ Child/Young person ■ No record

97. In terms of assessing outcomes and measures of police effectiveness, we noted that over 99% of missing episodes in Aberdeen in 2014 concluded with the missing person being found or returning safe and well. There were examples of officers detecting that missing people had been exposed to threat, risk and harm whilst missing and we discuss this in more detail in the following section on management of the return. Five of the 1120 missing episodes in Aberdeen concluded with a fatal outcome. All five fatalities were adults and three of the five were suicides whilst the other two related to substance abuse. Operational debriefs were held for each case and a small number of learning outcomes were identified, none of which suggested systematic changes were required.

98. We also found that 41% of all missing person episodes in Aberdeen in 2014 concluded with the person reported missing being traced directly by police officers as a result of investigation and search activities.[37]

---

[37] In the table above it should noted that the column marked N/A included open missing person cases and circumstances where it was not possible to glean the information from the recording system.

Figure 12: Graph indicating 'traced-by' for missing persons in Aberdeen in 2014: Source Police Scotland

Category	Value
Police	454
Returned of own accord	385
Not recorded	130
Family (inc.guardians)	47
Other person	28
Care home staff	25
Health services staff	23
Other agency	13
Friend / aquaintance of Misper	13
Social services	2

99.   Although our overwhelming conclusion is that investigation and search is being conducted thoroughly and professionally in Aberdeen City Division we did notice from some investigative records that relatives and guardians of people reported missing in Aberdeen are not always being given a single point of contact.

100.   The Police Scotland SOP states that **'the investigating officer should provide a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) so the family can provide and/or request information on the investigation'**, but the SOP does not clearly specify whether this single point of contact should be a named officer or whether it should be a technical point of contact such as the telephone number for a duty supervisor or a control room. We found that this instruction was a source of confusion to some officers who thought that the guidelines were a bit ambiguous and the SMPC confirmed to us that this area would benefit from clearer guidance to officers.

101.   When we interviewed service users in Aberdeen on this matter, they noted that most people go missing for relatively short periods of time, and that a designated SPOC was rarely felt necessary. They were confident that in the event of a high risk or longer-term missing person there would be a SPOC. Service users had no expectations otherwise and noted that shift patterns, both for the police and their own services, would make it difficult to implement. We therefore feel that this policy area would benefit from further review to ensure that the new national approach on the circumstances, triggers and mechanisms for the establishment of a SPOC is better understood and can be established locally in a workable way.

102. Service users in Aberdeen had very positive views in relation to the police handling of missing person investigations and we were given numerous examples of how well things worked in practice. Respondents were also happy with the level of communication and information sharing around ongoing investigations and we concluded that investigations into missing persons are being properly conducted in Aberdeen and in accordance with United Kingdom professional practice advice and generally in line with the Police Scotland SOP.

103. However, one area highlighted to us by service users was the potential for a 'clash of cultures' between police officers and care and health providers. A common theme running through some interviews was respondents' perception that on occasion some police officers see someone going missing from health and care settings as 'a problem' rather than as individual, or vulnerable person needing help. These perceptions varied by service user function.[38]

104. Respondents felt strongly that some police officers need to have a better understanding of the individual reported missing, the circumstances leading up to the missing episode and the work already done by staff to look for them. The sense that some officers lacked this understanding was a common factor in negative experiences of police responses to missing person reports. It was felt the some officers tended to see people who frequently abscond as troublesome, rather than at risk. Respondents felt that a child or patient is no less vulnerable because they frequently are not where they should be or where they are safe.

105. This was an issue picked up in the Serious Case Review of Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire which noted that the risk of child sexual exploitation increases with more episodes of absconding.[39] The need for better cross-agency understanding was discussed amongst partners at the Divisional Missing Person Tactical Group that we attended in Aberdeen and there is clearly a local appetite for more joint training and awareness sessions. We would encourage the inclusion of partnership training and awareness as a standing item on Divisional Missing Person Tactical Group agendas throughout Scotland.

---

[38] For example Children in Scotland, SIPR, and the Care Inspectorate conducted 18 interviews with health and children's services staff and in this case all respondents had experienced some officers viewing children or patients as a problem.

[39] Bedford, A. (2015). *Serious Case Review into Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire: from the experiences of Children A, B, C, D, E, and F,* extracted from: http://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SCR-into-CSE-in-Oxfordshire-FINAL-FOR-WEBSITE.pdf.

Management of the return

National context

106. There are two distinct but inter-related aspects to the management of the return phase of a police missing person investigation and those are **'safe and well checks'** and **'return interviews'**. The safe and well check occurs immediately after the missing person returns or is found but should not merely include a visual check, as often a person who appears physically well may in fact be concealing information which indicates the contrary. In this regard, the Police Scotland SOP states that where possible, officers should attempt to identify the causes and factors leading to a person going missing, as well as establishing what occurred whilst the person was missing. A return interview is a more formal part of the investigative process and is intended to assist in identifying ways of preventing the person going missing again in the future.

107. When missing people return they may feel guilty, ashamed and uncertain. Many will be unsure as to the role of the police and fear they may be arrested and a high number of people who have been missing refuse to fully engage with police officers on return from missing episodes. Others will see the police as their first opportunity for support and assistance. Return interviews for children and vulnerable adults are important mechanism for assessing the vulnerability to sexual exploitation and other forms of harm. Many children or vulnerable adults exposed to sexual exploitation whilst missing will not see themselves as victims and may not realise that they are being abused. A number of local and national charities and voluntary groups can provide support to missing people and their families.

108. There is a mixed legislative context around return interviews for missing people in the UK. In England and Wales, statutory responsibility for conducting return interviews with children and young people sits with the local authority and not the police. In many areas, this function is conducted by third sector charitable organisations with significant experience in the children's sector. For England and Wales, statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care instructs that return interviews **must be conducted independently**.[40]

109. In Scotland, there is no legislative guidance and this function has traditionally fallen to the police. There is however growing recognition in Scotland that the police and authority figures such as police officers in uniform may not be the best option for children in particular. In this regard, a Pilot scheme is currently underway in Renfrewshire where return interviews are conducted by Bernardo's. We anticipate that once evaluated, the findings from the Pilot scheme will help to shape Scottish Government thinking as it develops a national action plan and strategy around missing people in Scotland.

110. Those observations aside, return interviews are an important investigative tool to try to establish why a person has went missing, establish if they have come to any harm and to assist in identifying ways of preventing future episodes.

---

[40] Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, Department for Education: 2014:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care__3_.pdf.

111. Children and young people who go missing or runaway can be at risk, and return interviews are a way in which this, or any actual harm, can be uncovered and dealt with. One United Kingdom study found 11 per cent of young people said that they had been 'hurt or harmed' while away from home on the only or most recent occasion.[41] The same study found one in five young people said that they had stolen, begged or done 'other things' whilst away in order to survive.

112. Whilst much literature on return interviews focuses on children and young people up to 18 years, the ACPO missing persons guidance 2010 suggest that return interviews are 'relevant to all missing persons' regardless of age.[42] This position is mirrored in the Police Scotland SOP which instructs that a return interview must be completed for all missing people. We support the need for return interviews for all missing people as only by understanding the reasons for people going missing can the police and other agencies seek to reduce the risk of harm. Additionally, the delivery of collective harm reduction strategies with partners is the best way to prevent future missing episodes and offers the potential to deliver an overall reduction in the number of people who go missing in Scotland each year.

Management of the return in Aberdeen City Division

Return interviews – investigating officers

113. From examination of missing person records in Aberdeen City Division, we found that all return home interviews had been conducted in respect of children and young people aged 18 years or under. However, a significant number of adult records contained no information on return home interviews suggesting that these were not being conducted in a systematic manner as instructed by the Police Scotland SOP. This was also a finding from the internal audit and capability assessment conducted in Aberdeen by the Police Scotland NMPU who found that the division had a primary focus on looked after and accommodated children through a dedicated officer performing the divisional 'Return Home Welfare Interviewer' (RHWI) post.

114. Whilst this matter has already been captured in the divisional improvement plan for Aberdeen, our interviews with local officers would suggest that this matter needs to be reinforced by first line managers and senior management to ensure that officers are adhering to force policy.

> ### Recommendation 6
> Aberdeen City Division should put local arrangements in place to ensure that return home interviews (in addition to safe and well checks) are conducted by investigating officers for all missing people including adults in accordance with the provisions set out in the Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure.

---

[41] Rees, G. (2011) *Still Running 3: Early findings from our third national survey of young runaways* (London: The Children's Society).
[42] National Policing Improvement Agency, 2010:55

Return Home Welfare Interviewer (RHWI)

115. Under legacy Grampian Police arrangements and continuing under Police Scotland there is a dedicated constable who performs the RHWI function for Aberdeen City Division. Whilst 'return interviews' should be completed for every missing person by the investigating officer, Aberdeen City Division in common with Fife Division has additional tertiary arrangements for looked-after children. This involves a specially trained officer located in the partnership hub who is joint interview trained firstly screening all missing records. In circumstances where this specialist officer and partner agencies deem necessary, an additional welfare interview will be conducted for children where there is an identified need based on risk assessment.

116. The purpose of the role is to review all completed juvenile missing person enquiries and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken following the submission of a 'Concern Report' on the Police Scotland Interim Vulnerable Person Database (IVPD) by investigating officers. The RHWI officer works within the Community Safety Hub in Aberdeen, a partnership initiative that has received attention nationally and about which local stakeholders are overwhelmingly positive.[43]

117. Following background checks and if deemed appropriate, a return home welfare interview is arranged by the RHWI officer and can be at home, school or other suitable location. The input focuses on a number of areas including; further information gathering about the reported episode, addressing the risks and concerns associated with going missing in the community, examining the 'bigger picture', the reasons for going missing and any other relevant factors affecting the young person. The role allows Police Scotland to work in close partnership with a variety of local agencies including social work, education and health to collectively address the reasons for a young person going missing and to seek solutions through prevention and intervention.

118. During our inspection we had the opportunity to interview this officer and we were impressed by her commitment and dedication to the role. Members of the local command team and operational officers were full of praise for the work of this officer and her success can be illustrated through the following case study which we have sanitised for this report.

Case Study

In the summer of 2014, a teenage child was reported missing to the police in Aberdeen. The child was a regular missing person and in the previous year had been reported missing on more than 20 occasions. In this instance, the child was missing for more than 24 hours and through contact with other children the RHWI officer was able to provide some investigative options to the enquiry team. This led to the child being traced but under the influence of controlled drugs. The investigating officer visited the child the following day but the child would not disclose where they had been or what they had been doing. The child was aware from other children of the constable conducting the RHWI function and stated that they would only speak to her. Following interview the RHWI was able to establish that the child had stayed overnight at an address where two adults had provided amphetamines to the child. Police enquiries led to the adults concerned being identified, arrested and charged. Importantly, the child was removed from a dangerous situation and there were very few further episodes of the child being reported missing.

---

[43] Further information about the partnership hub is included in our main inspection report for Aberdeen.

119. Service users in Aberdeen told us that they thought that regular officers were less effective at obtaining information from children and young people, who frequently wouldn't talk to them. They felt that when this happens, it is a missed opportunity for intelligence gathering, safeguarding and in allowing the child to have a positive interaction with an officer they have built up a relationship with.

120. In addition to RHWI visits, this officer has developed the role to encompass; regular attendance at multi-agency meetings and Children's Hearings, regular liaison with children's homes in the City and early intervention work. At the point of our inspection, Aberdeen City Division had just appointed the operational missing person co-ordinator and was considering how best to re-model their local approach moving forwards. However, we did ascertain that when the RHWI officer is on leave or rest days then nobody has been picking up on her duties meaning that she returns to a backlog of work. In our view, this service gap creates a potential risk to children and young people and there is an opportunity to address this through review of the RHWI post in light of the Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure and the new Missing Person Operational Co-ordinator post to enhance overall resilience.

121. We acknowledge that the Divisional Commander has actually put in place additional measures which exceed the SOP to enhance the approach in Aberdeen City Division through the RHWI function. Whilst we recognise the added value that this local post delivers, we also feel that it could be further enhanced in parallel with the development of the new operational co-ordinator post.

> **Recommendation 7**
>
> Aberdeen City Division should conduct a review of the Return Home Welfare Interview (RHWI) function in light of the Police Scotland Standard Operating Procedure and new Missing Person Operational Co-ordinator post to ensure that an equitable service is available when the dedicated RHWI officer is not available due to rest days or annual leave.

Concern Forms and the Interim Vulnerable Person Database (IVPD)

122. In previous divisional inspections under our Local Policing + programme in Fife and Ayrshire we have publicly reported that some officers and staff had expressed concerns about the impact of IVPD. We touched on a number of interrelated developments such as the National Risk and Concern Project, and Divisional Concern Hubs within local Public Protection Units in our Ayrshire report and said that we would look at this in more detail during our inspection work in Aberdeen. However, we also recognise that the new i6 technology solution will have integrated elements for both missing and vulnerable people.

123. At the point of our inspection, we were also aware that the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Audit and Risk Committee had commissioned an assurance assessment to explore some data coding anomalies within IVPD which was making accurate management information difficult to abstract. Whilst we were sighted on this national assurance work by the SPA and Police Scotland, it was beyond the scope of our inspection activity in Aberdeen.

124. In seeking to explore matters relating to IVPD through the lens of missing persons we were immediately struck by the absence of any Police Scotland written policy guidance to assist officers throughout Scotland in knowing when a Concern Form should be submitted to IVPD in respect of a missing person. Whilst we understand the business need and value of a national vulnerable person database, many officers told us that the technology solution had been implemented before clear policy had been developed.

125. This absence of guidance had resulted in some divisions such as Fife following legacy arrangements with local partners and submitting high volumes of IVPD referrals for all missing children, whereas other divisions were adopting very different approaches. In the case of Aberdeen, there had been 527 IVPD referrals relating to 187 missing children in the fiscal year to February 2015 and 111 adult concern reports on IVPD for missing in the same period. Our assessment is that the level of referrals in Aberdeen was entirely appropriate and consistent with the levels of threat, risk and harm in individual cases. We interviewed partners in Aberdeen and there was no concern or suggestion that the thresholds being applied by Police Scotland were anything other than appropriate.

126. In Aberdeen, officers that we interviewed as part of the missing person inspection fully understood the need for the IVPD system and in respect of missing persons they did not view the completion of reports as cumbersome or bureaucratic. They explained that it could take 15 minutes to complete a Concern Form for a new missing person but if the subject had been missing previously the nominal-based technology had an auto-populate function which saved valuable time through not having to re-key previously recorded information. Nevertheless, we feel that many of the concerns around IVPD stem from internal national communication issues and to ensure national consistency we would encourage Police Scotland to issue policy guidance to staff on the circumstances under which a reported missing person should result in a vulnerable person database entry.

> **Recommendation 8**
>
> Police Scotland should issue policy guidance to staff on the circumstances under which a reported missing person should result in a vulnerable person database entry.

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

127. More broadly, there are particular issues for children that need to be considered by Police Scotland when developing missing person policy moving forwards. As of 01 April 2015, the new corporate parenting duties in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, 2014 came into effect with regard to looked after children. The Chief Constable is a named 'corporate parent' in the Act and the new duties require corporate parents to work together to overcome agency barriers.

128. At the time of our inspection, the Scottish Government had also launched a Consultation on the draft Statutory Guidance for Parts 4, 5 and 18 (Section 96) and related draft orders of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.[44] The Consultation is inviting views on draft Statutory Guidance on Parts 4 (Named Person), 5 (Child's Plan) and 18 (Section 96, Wellbeing). It relates to the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach to improving outcomes through the delivery of services to support the wellbeing of children and young people.

129. Whilst these further provisions of the 2014 Act will not come into effect until 2016, Corporate Parents will have a duty to share information about children with the designated named person and in the case of missing children the future expectation may be for the police to automatically notify in every missing instance. We therefore conclude that it would be appropriate for Police Scotland to review the need to give policy guidance to staff taking cognisance of emerging legislation around children and young people and in particular the corporate parenting duties on the Chief Constable that flow from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

130. From our inspection work in Aberdeen City Division we conclude that there is effective practice in the management of the return phase of missing person investigations. We are a generally satisfied that the identification of information and intelligence on threat, risk and harm is being captured where return interviews have been done, and we were given access to specific examples where police investigations had disrupted criminal activity and abuse against children and vulnerable adults. We will explore how such issues are managed through a multi-agency screening process in the final chapter of this report on harm reduction strategies.

---

[44] Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Draft Statutory Guidance: Scottish Government: 2015. http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00469613.pdf.

Harm reduction strategies

National context

131. Under the earlier leadership and governance section of this inspection report, we concluded that the early decision by the Chief Constable to appoint an executive lead for missing persons and the appointment of a dedicated SMPG and the creation of a National Missing Person Unit had set an appropriate strategic direction which was improving the national approach to the management of missing person investigations.

132. During our inspection, we found that the strategic emphasis under the SMPG was to approach missing people from a risk-led and harm reduction standpoint. The Police Scotland Strategic Assessment document also contained an intention by the executive lead officer to establish a national baseline to ensure that Police Scotland could understand the impact of harm reduction activity.

133. During our national assessment work, we noted that the NMPU had commissioned a missing person strategic assessment document so as to begin to understand the true nature and scale of missing people in Scotland. The strategic assessment document acknowledged that understanding the complexities around missing people was significantly impaired by lack of available police data in Scotland due to the various ICT constraints as previously discussed. We found that the Police Scotland strategic assessment document contains no empirical evidence from actual research in Scotland as to either the policing costs of investigating 32,000 missing episodes each year, or of the percentage of police time spent in Scotland on missing persons investigations.

134. Although there has been some limited research in two forces in England, there is a key knowledge gap in Scotland about the activity based costs to policing and other agencies and this may be an area where further academic research by the Scottish Institute of Policing Research or others could assist in further informing operational understanding.

Police Scotland National Missing Person Unit (NMPU)

135. As part of our national assessment activity we spoke with current and former staff from the NMPU. We were highly impressed by the work of this small unit and noted that it had been driving the improvement agenda around missing person investigative management and harm reduction strategies.

136. Over a period of around nine months, the NMPU had commissioned the Missing Person Strategic Assessment, devised and established the network of Tactical and Operational Co-ordinators, identified the need for divisional tactical assessments and had conducted extensive research before writing the new missing person SOP. The NMPU had also designed and delivered a single national risk-assessment tool and Aide-memoire card for operational staff, had drawn up the user-specification for the new i6 technology solution missing person element and had delivered a national e-learning module to front-line officers throughout Scotland.

137. The NMPU had also delivered training to external partners and had brought in external subject experts to deliver training to missing person tactical and operational co-ordinators with a particular focus on outcomes and harm reduction. The unit had also put arrangements in place to oversee the review of long-term missing cases and the superintendent and his small team had conducted more than 30 national case reviews, and internal capability assessment assurance reviews in four divisions leading to a corporate improvement plan around missing persons and a lessons-learned log.

138. In terms of national harm reduction strategies, the NMPU are currently working on three key areas in partnership with the Scottish Government and other strategic partners throughout Scotland. Those areas relate to the development of national protocols for looked-after and accommodated missing children, patients who go missing from NHS care, and the older people who go missing from care homes in Scotland.

139. At the time of our inspection, work in these three important areas was at an early stage. Their development and implementation will unpin the recommendations in the draft Scottish Government National Missing Persons Strategy.

140. Initially, the unit had comprised of the superintendent and a detective inspector. As developments gathered momentum, a sergeant was deployed to the unit to help draft the new SOP and a further sergeant had been deployed to the unit to design and deliver the e-learning package. However, at the point of our inspection the two sergeants had been re-deployed to other duties and the SMPC felt that this had resulted in a lack of resilience within the unit. On completion of our fieldwork and prior to writing up our report, the superintendent who had been the driving force in his capacity as Strategic Missing Person Co-ordinator was also re-deployed to other duties.

141. Work around harm reduction strategies with Scottish Government and other national partners are at a critical stage. It is also clear that the NMPU needs sufficient capacity to administer the national long-term missing person database, conduct national investigative reviews and support the ongoing improvement agenda around missing person investigations. We therefore recommend that Police Scotland should review the staffing issues in the NMPU so as not to lose the considerable traction and progress gained over the past 12 months.

> ### Recommendation 9
>
> Police Scotland should conduct a review of staffing within the National Missing Person Unit to ensure that it has sufficient capacity to administer the national long-term missing person database, conduct national investigative reviews and support the ongoing improvement agenda around missing person investigations.

Scottish Government Missing Person Steering Group

142. As discussed under the earlier leadership and governance section, the Scottish Government Director of Safer Communities chairs a Scottish Government Missing Person Steering Group. This group is overseeing the development of a National Missing Persons Strategy for Scotland with a range of partners, including Police Scotland. In terms of strategic harm reduction strategies the Strategy will focus on four key themes of Prevent, Respond, Support and Protect.

143. These four themes and their relationship to Police Scotland's work to develop the three Protocols are illustrated as follows:

Figure 14:   Missing person strategy harm reduction cycle: Source, Police Scotland
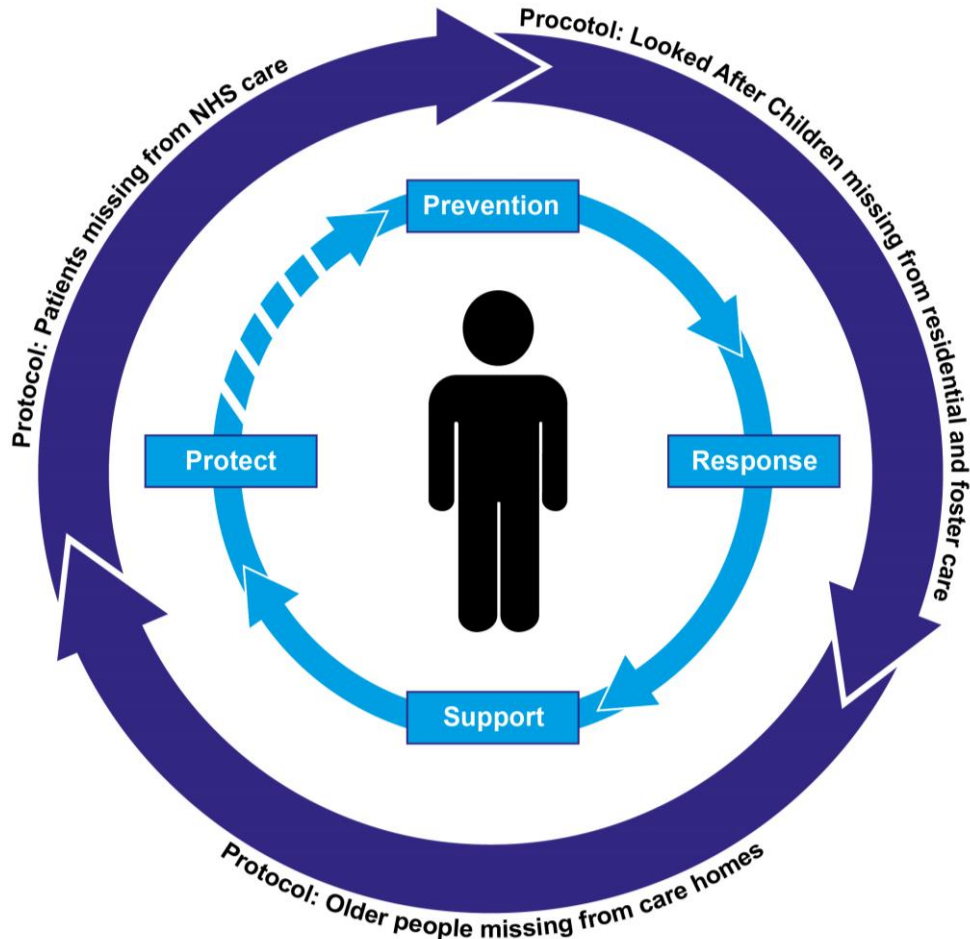
144. During our national assessment work, we were able to observe at a meeting of the Scottish Government led Steering Group and noted from discussions that data brought forwards to this group by Police Scotland focussed exclusively on macro level national data and the overall number of reported missing episodes in Scotland and the relevant percentages attributable to children's homes, NHS hospitals and other care settings.

145. From strategic government led discussions, it was apparent to us that whilst the Police Scotland strategic missing person assessment had began to highlight the scale of the problem in Scotland, it was equally the case that the overall analysis within the national product was significantly diminished by a general lack of more detailed analysis at a divisional/community planning partnership level. From this, we conclude that the true nature, extent and impact of missing people in Scotland cannot be more fully understood until all of the police divisions in Scotland follow the approach taken in Aberdeen and prepare a full and comprehensive tactical assessment of missing in their local authority areas. By doing this, Police Scotland will achieve a better strategic product but perhaps more importantly will illuminate local partnership understanding around missing in Scotland in a way that offers the potential to influence Single Outcome Agreements (SOA's) and in turn the strategic agendas of local child and adult protection committees. This would also help to deliver on the key reform objective of protecting and improving local services.

> **Recommendation 10**
>
> Police Scotland should ensure that all divisions develop missing person tactical assessments at local authority level to share with local community planning partners including child and adult protection committees.

Protocol with MissingPeople

146.   In December 2014, Police Scotland and the leading UK charity for missing people missingpeople.org.uk signed a joint strategic harm reduction protocol that would enable Police Scotland to signpost missing people and their families to a range of valuable support services. Missing People is the only charity in the UK which specialises in, and is dedicated to, bringing missing children and adults back together with their families and further details of the charity are included in Appendix 'B' to this report.[45]

147.   Police Scotland has brought missingpeople.org.uk in to deliver expertise and training to tactical and operational missing person co-ordinators and details of the services provided by the charity are included in the Police Scotland SOP, training materials and aide-memoire card.

148.   As part of our national assessment activity, we spoke with missingpeople.org.uk who spoke highly of the strategic direction of travel under Police Scotland and of the focus on trying to achieve better outcomes for missing people and their families. Prior to the signing of the protocol in December 2014, we learned that there had been very few referrals from Scotland to the family support services offered by the charity and there had been no uses of the TextSafe® service[46] In the following three months to the period when we completed our inspection activity we found that family support referrals from Scotland had increased to six every month and that use of the TextSafe service had increased to 100 uses in the twelve week period following signing of the protocol. These improvements have yet to be evaluated but we are encouraged by the early evidence of potential harm reduction outcomes to missing people and their families.

---

[45] http://www.scotland.police.uk/whats-happening/news/2014/december/police-scotland-and-leading-uk-charity-join-forces.

[46] TextSafe is a way to reach out to a vulnerable missing child or adult and let them know that confidential helpline services are available to them. By requesting a TextSafe, a person triggers a text message which will be sent to their mobile phone explaining how they can get in touch with missingpeople.org.uk for free, 24/7. The text is sent from Missing People rather than from the police. Therefore, those who might be hesitant to contact the police still have access to assistance from a 'neutral' confidential charity. It may be that as a result of getting in contact with Missing People, the missing person then decides to initiate contact with the police, their family or social services. Therefore, as well as providing a crucial safeguarding role, TextSafe is also likely to reduce the number and duration of missing episodes.

Harm reduction strategies in Aberdeen City Division

Operational harm reduction arrangements in Aberdeen

149. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the case of Aberdeen City Division we found that there had been 527 IVPD referrals relating to 187 missing children in the fiscal year to February 2015 and 111 adult concern reports on IVPD for missing in the same period. Aberdeen has implemented the GIRFEC National Practice Model with Named Person and Lead Professional roles and responsibilities agreed.[47]

150. As part of this, Aberdeen has implemented multi-agency screening (MAS) for dealing with IVPD Concern Reports and has also published a practice guide. MAS arrangements are an integral element of ensuring multi-agency sharing of information in a timely manner. The MAS process will be in place until the full implementation of the Named Person role in 2016 as envisaged under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

151. The target harm reduction outcomes for MAS are to:

- Ensure early identification of emerging patterns of risk or escalating concerns.

- Help to prevent children and young people from escalating through the statutory system and ensure a proportionate response.

- Share proportionate and appropriate information about children and young people at an early stage and ensure a timely response.

- Improve outcomes for children and young people who come to the attention of statutory agencies and ensure that decisions are made based on shared information.

152. Full details of the MAS arrangements in Aberdeen and a process flowchart can be seen on the Child Protection Committee thresholds guidance on the Aberdeen City website.[48] Multi-agency referral arrangements are also in place for adults and are contained within the Inter-agency Policy and Procedure for the Protection of Adults at Risk of Harm.[49]

153. Our assessment is that sound operational arrangements are in place in Aberdeen to deal with partnership information sharing on a case by case basis. We conclude that the level of referrals in Aberdeen was entirely appropriate to and consistent with the levels of threat, risk and harm in individual missing person records that we examined in Aberdeen.

154. Overall service users and partner agencies that we interviewed were very positive about the response they get from the police when reporting someone as missing. They had confidence in the operational ability of the police and when there were issues in the investigational response, these were seen as 'blips' or one-offs. There was also a consistent and strong commitment to working with the police (and other partners) and staff recognised that partnership working was the only way to achieve the best for the vulnerable people in their care.

---

[47] *Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC),* National Practice Model, Scottish Government: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/national-practice-model.
[48] http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?lID=60090&sID=25303
[49] http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/about/departments/FinalAdultSupportProtectionPolicy2012.pdf

155. There was also considerable ownership of and commitment to the joint protocols that had been developed locally prior to the formation of Police Scotland. These were felt to work well in Aberdeen and partner agencies interviewed by HMICS staff felt that on-going work was needed to ensure that local solutions are negotiated and agreed within broad national parameters.

Tactical harm reduction arrangements around missing in Aberdeen

156. At the point of our inspection in January and February 2015, tactical arrangements for missing person management in Aberdeen were just reaching maturity and had developed to a stage where local partnership agencies had been invited to the Divisional Missing Person Tactical Group. At this juncture, the division had also produced its first tactical assessment/problem profile for missing persons in Aberdeen. As already mentioned this has resulted in a document which affords a depth and clarity in relation to understanding the aggregated context around the nature and extent of reported missing episodes in Aberdeen.

157. At the point of our inspection, this product had just been produced and had not yet been shared with partners to help inform harm reduction strategies at a tactical or more strategic level. This was purely a timing issue, and we are confident that the divisional command team will consider how best to share the key findings with community planning partners in Aberdeen and in particular child and adult protection committees in line with our recommendation on this issue.

158. However, from our interviews with service users in Aberdeen one of the strongest and most consistent themes emerging was the importance of 'getting round the table' and building effective relationships, whether it was an informal meeting, a case conference or joint training. This was also a view expressed by the partners who attended the partnership tactical meeting around missing people that we were able to observe as part of our inspection work.

159. Partners felt that face-to-face communication generated greater mutual understanding and respect for each other's roles, their statutory responsibilities and constraints, and was a crucial factor in building positive working relationships. These in turn meant that when there were missing person episodes, the police were seen to deal with them more appropriately and helped prevent some of the negative attitudes referred to earlier in this inspection report.

Strategic harm reduction arrangements around missing in Aberdeen City Division

160. From discussions with strategic partners in Aberdeen we found strong evidence to support a conclusion that there is effective information-sharing between agencies about individual missing episodes where required and that harm reduction strategies are in place on a case-by-case basis. However, due to the sequencing and development of new tactical arrangements as discussed, we also found that strategic partnership harm reduction strategies were not yet being informed by the newly developed composite police tactical assessment for missing people, and that there was no collective partnership tactical assessment drawing on the composite information and intelligence held by key local agencies.

161. For example, the chair of the Child Protection Committee had seen a sanitised version of the Police Scotland missing person strategic assessment with some macro-level data for Aberdeen but she had not yet seen the new local tactical assessment that would give her a more detailed understanding of local trends,

patterns, assessed vulnerabilities or geographical hotspots. Similarly, whilst she was satisfied that risk and harm around missing children was being dealt with appropriately on a case-by-case basis she had not seen composite information and intelligence products from other partners that could provide additional strategic insight and assurance.

162. Aberdeen City council keep detailed records for every episode when a child or young person goes missing. As a matter of course, children's homes record all relevant information in order to identify and assess individual vulnerability. However the information from these records is not routinely collated and analysed for patterns of behaviour or emerging intelligence across different groups or communities and neither is the aggregated data that is held by the police. This gap is recognised by Aberdeen City Council children's services and there are plans for a new post to be created, with a remit to review and analyse the information on individual episodes and to speak to the children. The council recognises this will have to be done in conjunction with the police, and it is important that the police are equally engaged, in order for all the available information to be effectively analysed and to reduce the risk of the same information being collected and analysed by different organisations.

163. The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014 gives guidance on children and young people who place themselves at risk including running away and going missing. Paragraph 616 of the National Guidance states that: *'Child Protection Committees are required to ensure that there are multi-agency policies, procedures and systems in place for identifying, referring and responding to these types of concerns'.*

164. The National Guidance also states:

*'A child or young person who has run away, and cases where children/young people have been 'thrown out' by their parents or carers, are both covered by the term 'runaway'... Children and young people who go missing remain vulnerable to the factors that led to them going missing as well as to the risks associated with being missing. **The number of children classified as missing is not clear** [emphasis added] but extreme cases can result in homelessness and sleeping rough, engaging in crime, drugs and vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Many cases are never reported to police and few such children ever approach agencies for help'*

(National Guidelines for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014: Scottish Government).

165. Our findings in Aberdeen confirm that there are effective multi-agency harm reduction policies, procedures and systems in place for identifying, referring and responding to concerns on a case-by-case basis but that there are opportunities for improvement in strategic harm reduction strategies. Such improvements are within the capabilities of local partners and should centre on more routine analysis and sharing of data and on patterns of behaviour or emerging intelligence across different groups or communities.

Recommendation 11

Police Scotland should work with local authorities and local child and adult protection committees in developing more routine analysis and sharing of data about missing people to inform shared partnership tactical assessments.
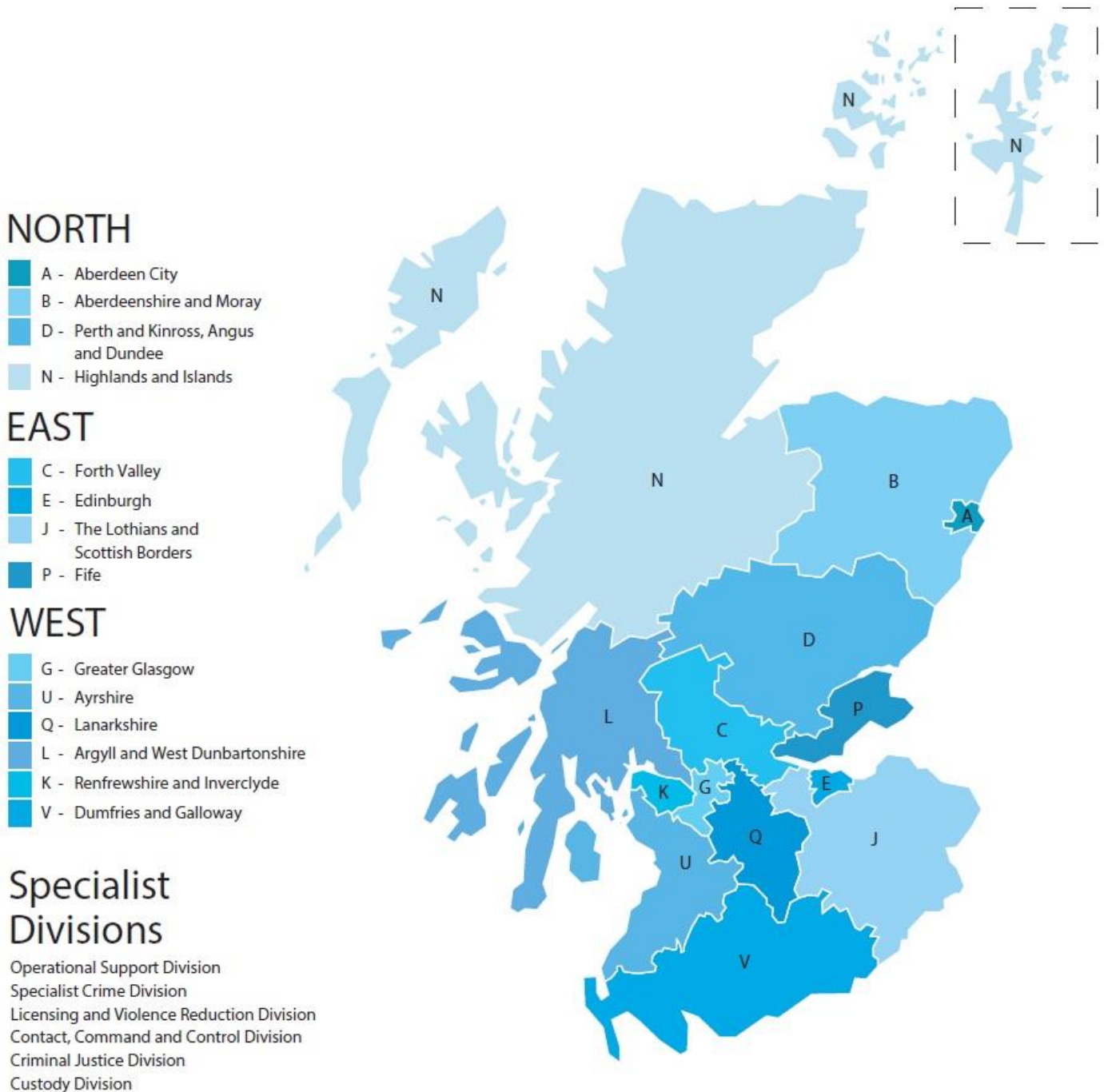
Delivering the benefits of reform

166.   In conducting this inspection, we have taken the opportunity to look at the objectives of police reform in Scotland through the lens of missing person investigations in Aberdeen City Division. In doing so, we have found that the strategic leadership commitment to continuous improvement under Police Scotland is strong. We have found evidence to support a conclusion that new national arrangements are protecting and improving local policing services and that there is more equal access to national support and capacity around search and investigation.

.

Appendix 'A' – Map indicating Police Scotland Divisions: Source Police Scotland

NORTH

A - Aberdeen City
B - Aberdeenshire and Moray
D - Perth and Kinross, Angus and Dundee
N - Highlands and Islands

EAST

C - Forth Valley
E - Edinburgh
J - The Lothians and Scottish Borders
P - Fife

WEST

G - Greater Glasgow
U - Ayrshire
Q - Lanarkshire
L - Argyll and West Dunbartonshire
K - Renfrewshire and Inverclyde
V - Dumfries and Galloway

Specialist Divisions

Operational Support Division
Specialist Crime Division
Licensing and Violence Reduction Division
Contact, Command and Control Division
Criminal Justice Division
Custody Division

Appendix 'B' – Information on organisations and agencies who assisted our research

Children in Scotland

Children in Scotland is the umbrella body for the children's sector in Scotland, representing children's sector organisations and individuals across the voluntary, private and public sectors. Children in Scotland works to influence politicians and policy-makers, as well as to inform and train the sector workforce, and give practitioners, parents and children and young people a real voice in shaping the future of childhood in Scotland.

Children in Scotland has a dedicated policy and research team, who work with member organisations and individuals to inform and influence legislation, while also focusing on specific pieces of project work. They jointly hold the secretariat for the Children and Young People Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament run the Scotland's Children Forum, and have played an integral role in the development of the 4 nation's policy group. Children in Scotland also hold membership of Eurochild.[50]

Jackie Brock is the Chief Executive and has recently authored The Brock Report: Safeguarding Scotland's vulnerable children from child abuse, November 2014 which comprised a review of the Scottish system. The report may be accessed via the following link: http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/BrockReportFinal.pdf

Further information on Children in Scotland can be found on their website via the following link: http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do

Scottish Institute of Policing Research (SIPR)

The Scottish Institute of Policing Research (SIPR) is a strategic collaboration between 12 of Scotland's universities and Police Scotland, offering a range of opportunities for conducting relevant, applicable research to help the police meet the challenges of the 21st century and for achieving international excellence for policing research in Scotland.[51]

The Director of SIPR is Professor Nicholas Fyfe and further information about SIPR and its many policing research activities and publications can be found on the SIPR website via the following link: http://www.sipr.ac.uk/

Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate is an independent scrutiny and improvement body for care services in Scotland. They exist to make sure that people receive high quality care and ensure that services promote and protect their rights.

The Care Inspectorate is leading new joint inspections of children's services in every area of Scotland. Rather than looking just at individual care services, these strategic inspections bring together professionals from the care, social work, health, police and education regulators. They provide public assurance about the quality of services aimed at giving children and young people the best start in life, and make recommendations about what needs to improve. Each inspection team also includes specially-trained "young inspectors" who can speak to children and young people about their experiences.

---

[50] Eurochild is a network of organisations and individuals working in and across Europe to promote the rights and well-being of children and young people: http://www.eurochild.org/
[51] Abertay, Dundee, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Heriot-Watt, Robert Gordon, St Andrew's, Stirling, Strathclyde and West of Scotland universities.

Further information about the Care Inspectorate can be found via the following link: http://www.scswis.com/

UK National Crime Agency Missing Persons Bureau (NCA MPB)

The National Crime Agency Missing Persons Bureau is the UK national and international point of contact for all missing person and unidentified body investigations. The NCA MPB provides support and advice to police forces in order to resolve cases and act as a hub for the exchange of information and expertise. They also maintain the national database of missing and unidentified records.

The NCA MPB provides support and advice to police forces to resolve missing person cases and assist in the identification of bodies and remains. They also maintain a central national database of missing persons and unidentified cases.

The range of services provided to police forces includes:

- National and international cross-matching of outstanding missing individuals with unidentified people, bodies and remains

- Co-ordination of enquiries with a network of partners

- Procedural assistance around effective retrieval and retention of forensic material

- Tactical advice and support to suspicious cases, such as suspected homicide and no-body murders, and cold case reviews

- Access to specialist advice from experts in a range of fields

- Collation and dissemination of good practice in missing person enquiries

- Provision of training to forces on missing and unidentified case investigations

Further information on the NCA MPB can be found via the following link: http://www.missingpersons.police.uk/

ACPO Missing Persons Strategic Lead and Strategic Oversight Group (SOG)

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) strategic lead for missing persons in the UK is Chief Constable Pat Geenty, Wiltshire Police. The ACPO Strategic Oversight Group includes membership from Police Scotland and develops professional policing practice in the area of missing person investigations. Further information about ACPO and the Missing Persons Strategic Oversight Group can be found via the following link: http://www.acpo.police.uk/Home.aspx

Note: On 01 April 2015 ACPO was dissolved and superseded by the National Police Chief's Council in England and Wales (NPCC). The current national policing lead for missing persons is Chief Constable Mike Veale, Wiltshire Police.

College of Policing

The College of Policing is the professional body for policing in England and Wales and is funded through the Home Office. It has a mandate to set standards in professional development, including codes of practice and regulations, to ensure consistency across the 43 forces in England and Wales. The College of Policing also has a remit to set standards for the police service on training, development, skills and qualifications and provides support to help the service implement national standards.

Due to the devolved nature of policing in Scotland, Police Scotland and other policing services such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland engage with the College of Policing on a voluntary rather than statutory basis. Further information about the College of Policing can be found via the following link: http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx

Missing People Charity

Missing People is the only charity in the UK which specialises in, and is dedicated to, bringing missing children and adults back together with their families. Missing People are there to support people who go missing and their families 24 hours a day, every day of the year, at the end of a phone, text or email. Missing People are a strategic partner of Police Scotland and a formal protocol exists between both agencies.

Missing People provides a 24/7, free confidential helpline for missing adults, children and their families offering support and advice. Text or Call 116000 or e-mail 116000@missingpeople.org.uk. For police officers they provide a range of services to help find and safeguard missing people including their TextSafe service – through which they can reach out to a vulnerable missing child and adult.

They offer a wide range of services including a publicity appeals service, where they create and then disseminate tailored publicity appeals through a network of local and national media, poster partners and 100,000 social media followers as well as the national network of digital advertising billboards thanks to their partnership with the Outdoor Media Centre.

Further information about Missing People can be found via the following link: https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/

UK Centre for the Study of Missing Persons (CSMP)

The UK Centre for the Study of Missing Persons was founded to accommodate the growing interest in the field of missing persons. It provides a clear focus for research, knowledge transfer and educational provision to academics, professionals in this community and relatives of missing people.

The Centre is based at the University of Portsmouth and the Director is Dr. Shalev Greene. CSMP has an advisory board with membership including SIPR, NCA MPB, ACPO, Missing People charity and Missing Children Europe.

Further information on CSMP can be found via the following link: http://www.port.ac.uk/centre-for-the-study-of-missing-persons/

Appendix 'C' – Glossary

ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
APP	Authorised Professional Practice
ASC	Area Service Centre
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CIU	Communications Investigation Unit
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
C3	Contact, Command & Control Division
GIRFEC	Getting It Right For Every Child
GIS	Geographical Information System
HMICS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IIU	Internet Investigations Unit
IVPD	Interim Vulnerable Person Database
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MAS	Multi Agency Screening
MPDD	Missing Person DNA Database
NCA	National Crime Agency
NCAIU	National Child Abuse Investigation Unit
NCA MPB	National Crime Agency Missing Persons Bureau
NHS	National Health Service
NMPU	National Missing Person Unit (Police Scotland)
NIB	National Intelligence Bureau
NPIA	Former National Police Improvement Agency
OSD	Operational Support Division
PIRC	Police Investigations and Review Commissioner
PPU	Public Protection Unit
RHWI	Return Home Welfare Interviewer
ROSIE	Research of Open Source Internet and Emails
SCD	Specialist Crime Division
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
SIPR	Scottish Institute of Policing Research
SMPC	Strategic Missing Person Co-ordinator
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPA	Scottish Police Authority
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
VR Dogs	Victim Recovery Dogs

About Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

HMICS operates independently of Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Government. Under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, our role is to review the state, effectiveness and efficiency of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. We support improvement in policing by carrying out inspections, making recommendations and highlighting effective practice.