



Report To:	Inverclyde Alliance Board	Date:	1 October 2018
Report By:	Louise McVey Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Manager	Report No:	
Contact Officer:	Louise McVey	Contact No:	01475 712042
Subject:	National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of the Board a letter (see Appendix 1) received from Ash Denham, Minister for Community Safety regarding the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scottish Government published Scotland's first national framework for missing people on 10 May 2017, which can be viewed here <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/05/1901>.
- 2.2 The National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland sets out the roles and shared responsibilities of respective agencies, as well as key national objectives and supporting commitments to focus efforts on preventing people from going missing and limiting the harm associated when they do go missing.
- 2.3 Through this Framework, the Scottish Government is providing a focus for all agencies with an interest in missing people to work together.
- 2.4 Ash Denham, Minister for Community Safety wrote to the chairs of Community Planning Partnerships asking for help in supporting the implementation of the framework.
- 2.5 The Scottish Government set out that taking a multi-agency approach can prevent many missing episodes in the future and asks Community Planning Partnerships to consider the framework recommendations and the positive steps organisations can take to support work with people who go missing or are at risk of going missing.
- 2.6 The Community Safety Partnership is the key partnership for taking forward the recommendations in the framework and it is suggested that the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland is remitted to the Community Safety Partnership to progress.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Alliance Board:

- a. Notes the letter from Ash Denham, Minister for Community Safety
- b. Remits the implementation of the framework to the Inverclyde Community Safety Partnership.

Louise McVey
Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Manager

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Over 30,000 episodes of people going missing are reported to Police Scotland every year. In 2015/16, that figure was 40,070. Going missing exposes people to unnecessary risks; it impacts negatively on their health and wellbeing; and, in a small number of cases, it can lead to death.

4.2 Anyone can be affected by someone going missing. That is why the Scottish Government urges that agencies need to continue to work together to prevent people from going missing in the first place and to do their best to keep them safe from the potential risks they could be exposed to. However, it is also important that those who do go missing are located quickly and are given the support they need to allow them to return to their communities or to build new lives for themselves.

4.3 The Framework clarifies responsibilities and sets out a clear set of objectives and supporting commitments. Through this, the Government suggest it will improve the way agencies deal with the issue in Scotland and bring more consistency to bear on how agencies protect and support missing people and their families.

4.4 The aim with the framework is to build on existing good work. The Government wants to:

- prevent people from going missing in the first place: and
- limit the harm associated with people going missing.

4.5 A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are 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.

4.6 To achieve its aims, the Framework focuses on four closely interconnected objectives:

- To introduce preventative measures to reduce the number of episodes of people going missing.
- To respond consistently and appropriately to missing persons episodes.
- To provide the best possible support to missing people and their families.
- To protect vulnerable people to reduce the risk of harm.

All four objectives are mutually supportive and are underpinned by a series of commitments. They are all targeted at the groups most likely to go missing - children and young people; vulnerable adults; and older people with dementia.

4.7 Underpinning the objectives are a series of commitments, requiring action both nationally and locally. However, much of the local action is most likely already taking place through multi-agency partnerships and no new requirements are being placed on partners. There are a number of actions set out in the framework to support the delivery of the commitments:

1) Agencies to ensure that prevention planning takes place locally for vulnerable individuals and groups.

- We will ensure that, where appropriate, responsible agencies will involve all young people in care or who have a care plan and are at risk of going missing in their respective care plans.
- We will ensure that, when agencies undertake assessments of vulnerable adults and those at risk of harm, these will take account of the potential for them going missing at some point and put in place preventative measures where these are appropriate.

2) Agencies to ensure that people most at risk of going missing are treated as a priority locally.

- Through this Framework we will ensure that local multi-agency partnerships will work together to help children, young people and adults who are vulnerable or at risk of harm by:

- establishing appropriate information sharing protocol;
- developing local strategies to safeguard vulnerable people and prevent missing episodes;
- Identifying a missing persons 'champion' for the partnership.

3) Agencies to exchange proportionate information to ensure that missing people are located quickly.

- We will ensure that practitioners consider whether information about missing children or young people should be passed to their Named Person where it would help to support, promote or safeguard their wellbeing.
- We will ensure that local partners agree information sharing protocols for missing persons.

4) Agencies to adopt a consistent approach to risk assessment when someone goes missing.

- Through this Framework, all the relevant agencies will adopt: (a) the national definition of a 'missing person' outlined; and (b) the 'low' / 'medium' / 'high' definition of risk for missing people.

5) Agencies to hold return discussions with young people and adults after they have been missing.

- Local partners to agree a consistent return discussion procedure for their area.
- Scottish Government, with partners, will develop training for return discussions.

6) Agencies to ensure that specialist support is made available to people who have been missing and their families.

- Through this Framework, all local multi-agency partnerships will draw in specialist expertise on missing people that is available locally and will build signposting to support services into their protocol.

7) Scottish Government to oversee a programme of activity to raise awareness of missing people.

- Through this Framework, the Scottish Government and partners will raise awareness of missing persons; the scale of the problem; and the risks associated with going missing.

8) Scottish Government to ensure that risks of harm are highlighted in all training and guidance.

4.8 The Framework clarifies responsibilities and sets out a clear set of objectives and supporting commitments. It also includes an Implementation Plan and makes a commitment to review progress. Through this, it will improve the way partners deal with the issue in Scotland and bring more consistency to bear on how nationally agencies protect and support missing people and their families.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 It is proposed that the Alliance Board note the publication of the National Framework for Missing persons in Scotland and remit the implementation of the commitments and actions to the Inverclyde Community Safety Partnership.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Legal: none at present
 Finance: none at present
 Human Resources: none at present
 Equality and Diversity: none at present
 Repopulation: none at present
 Inequalities: none at present.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 N/A

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/05/1901>

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Community Planning Partnership
Chairperson

24 August 2018

Dear Community Planning Chairperson

National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland

I am writing to seek your help in supporting the implementation of the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland in the areas you serve. You will be aware that on 10 May 2017, the Scottish Government published Scotland's first national framework for missing people, which can be found via the following link:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/05/1901>.

The Framework, has been widely welcomed by stakeholders. It seeks to improve the response to missing people in three key ways – through prevention, the reduction of harm and improved multi-agency working. In the areas where Framework recommendations have been adopted, we are already seeing improvements in outcomes for missing people and their families.

One key element is the delivery of return discussions. These are undertaken with missing adults and children after they are located with the aim being to understand why the individual went missing, to identify any harm experienced, and to identify the underlying causes of the missing incident so that these can be properly addressed. There is strong evidence to demonstrate that providing high quality return discussions can have a major impact on reducing the number of people going missing repeatedly. Sadly, in 2017-18, 57% of all of the people who went missing had done so on more than one occasion. However, every time someone returns from being missing we have an opportunity ensure that they receive the support that will prevent them from going missing again in the future.

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Over the past six months, the Missing People charity – working in partnership with Barnardo's, Shelter Scotland and the University of Glasgow – has been delivering specialised training, funded by the Scottish Government, on return discussions for professionals who work with people who go, or who have been, missing.

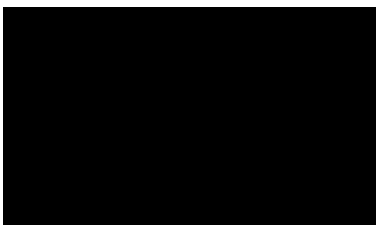
Feedback from the training has shown that professionals from all fields understand the importance of return discussions and recognise the potential their role can play in their delivery. At present, Police Scotland carry out the majority of return discussions, but this does not need to be the case. In fact, evidence shows that many individuals returning from being missing are uncomfortable participating in a conversation with police. It is therefore vital that alternative options for delivering return discussions are available and all organisations, including your own, should consider leading on the provision of return discussions in appropriate circumstances.

The Framework positively promotes this multi-agency provision, and the return discussion training delivered to professionals to date has ensured that they have a better understanding of the reasons for a person going missing and what may be done to avoid another missing episode. The training gives professionals the skills to carry out the discussions themselves and I would encourage all those who work with people who are at risk of going missing to take up the opportunity to learn more in this area. The training has currently been completed but for further information about this work you can contact partners@missingpeople.org.uk.

Additionally, it would be helpful if those in leadership positions, such as yourself, could ensure that those who are working with adults and children at risk of going missing are authorised and empowered to take responsibility for delivering return discussions, eliminating any perceived barriers that might be preventing them from delivering the best outcomes possible for the individual who has been missing.

By taking this multi-agency approach, I believe we can prevent many missing episodes in the future and I encourage you to consider the Framework recommendations and the positive steps your organisation can take to support work with people who go missing or are at risk of going missing. If you would like to discuss this matter further, you should contact Stephen Coulter who works in the Community Safety Unit at The Scottish Government. Stephen can be contacted at stephen.coulter@gov.scot.

Yours sincerely,



Ash Denham
Minister for Community Safety

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