



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Name of policy, procedure or activity:

MISSING PERSONS

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What is an EIA?

An EIA is an evidence based assessment of how a policy or activity will positively support Gwent Police’s general equality duties, as well as identify any potential negative disproportionate impact on people or groups of people.

The EIA will also outline any steps to redress this.

For ease of reference, within this document the term ‘policy or activity’ will be used, but must be taken to mean any functions, activities or decisions that may affect external communities or internal personnel.

1.0 Identification section

Title: MISSING PERSONS

Reference: 225/1 A ISSUE 4

Chief Officer Lead: ACC

Service Area: NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PARTNERSHIP

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Review Date: AUGUST 2013

2.0 Purpose

Please answer all of the following questions, using guidance information in section 5 to help you with your responses.

2.1 Aims

What are the aims of the policy or activity and how do they fit with the wider aims of the organisation?

Gwent Police is committed to providing a highly professional service to its community in line with its statement of purpose, values, aims and standards.

The aim of this Policy is to direct police involvement in the management of Missing Person enquiries, taking into account best practice and the legal and moral responsibility of the police service to prevent and detect crime and maintain public safety.

This Policy is aimed at police staff having responsibility for the investigation of reports of Persons Missing and Found within Gwent Police. It demonstrates the commitment of Gwent Police to ACPO (2010) Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons.

2.2 Motivators

What are the motivators or driving forces in the development of this policy or activity?

Gwent Police is committed to reducing and detecting crime, and bringing offenders to justice. The investigation and resolution of Missing Person enquiries has been recognised as an area of business that presents a significant impact upon our communities.

2.3 Equality duties

This section outlines if and how this policy or activity helps support Gwent Police's equality duties. Protected characteristics are listed in the Guidance document in sections 3.1 to 3.10.

2.3.1 How does this policy or activity help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

Gwent Police supports the ACPO definition of a 'Missing Person', which is:-

“Anyone whose whereabouts are unknown whatever the circumstances of disappearance. They will be considered missing until located and their well being or otherwise established.”

The implementation of this policy and the COMPACT (Missing Persons) system recognises the need to keep unnecessary bureaucracy to a minimum, in order to maximise the time available for investigation of the enquiry. At the same time it facilitates the secure and speedy management of information, intelligence, instruction and investigation. Access to the COMPACT site can be obtained via the front page of the Force Intranet.

Many missing person enquiries will involve persons with protected characteristics and require police personnel to exercise tact and sensitivity in conducting enquiries.

Examples of such situations could be sensitivities around forced marriages and the fundamental difference between those and arranged marriages, alerting officers not to confuse the two.

2.3.2 How does this policy or activity help to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it?

Compact or the Coordinated Missing Persons and case tracking system is now in place and embedded into Gwent Police. Missing person reports can be received from across all ranges of the community including individuals with protected characteristics. Our approach to missing persons will aim to treat people fairly and ensure that risks are properly assessed and that those with specific vulnerability are treated accordingly. Also the role of partners and voluntary agencies will be an important consideration when dealing with missing persons particularly those who are vulnerable. We will aim to involve the IAG and seek advice where necessary. We will seek to ensure staff are aware of diversity and equality issues relating to missing persons, addressing complaints from members of the public and taking action in the form of lessons learned.

2.3.3 How does this policy or activity help to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it?

In addition to the missing person policy and guidance we will also consider our community impact procedures and those relating to critical incidents in dealing with

missing persons. This may be particularly relevant where there may be barriers in some areas of the community. In our partnership arrangements we will aim to share best practice and cooperate fully where necessary. The emphasis in implementing this policy will be to ensure that full use is made of community engagement through our current arrangements and both local and national media where applicable.

3.0 Assessment

This section assesses whether there any aspects of the policy or activity, including how it is delivered, or accessed, that could contribute to inequality or discrimination. Please answer all of the following questions, using guidance information in section 6 to help you with your responses. You should provide evidence in this section for your answers.

3.1 Age

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

Age will be a very significant factor in determining the level of risk. It will be of potentially great importance with a child of tender years for a number of reasons: -

- The child is so young that it is physically unable to interact safely with the environment or its surrounding
- The child may be unable to prevent itself being exploited for a criminal purpose i.e. trafficking for the vice industry
- The child may be the victim of a predatory paedophile. This is a particularly important matter to consider. **The time since disappearance could be vital for the survival of the child.** Statistics show that in the case of abduction in such circumstances the child is unlikely to be alive after six hours. Urgent action is essential.

In the case of a very elderly person physical frailty must be a prime consideration, this could be of particular significance if:

- The weather conditions are particularly inclement
- The elderly person has impaired intellect e.g. Alzheimer's.

A significant number of persons going missing relate to young and vulnerable individuals such as those living in a care setting. Some individuals go missing repeatedly and through working in partnership with other agencies. Through making available comprehensive advice and guidance to our staff this can improve our service and the way we investigate and respond to missing persons.

3.2 Disability

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

Often disabled people may be considered to be vulnerable in relation to specific aspects of their particular circumstances. The circumstances around them being reported missing may be the consequence of a range of reasons such as health concerns, or they may have been subject of hate crime, or domestic violence for instance. This policy is aimed to ensure the robust investigation of the circumstances surrounding an individual going missing. This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on disabled people.

3.3 Gender reassignment

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic.

3.4 Marriage and civil partnership

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

Investigating officers should robustly investigate the circumstances and underlying causes of why someone has gone missing. This could for instance be because of domestic violence or forced marriage. This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic.

3.5 Pregnancy and maternity

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

Pregnant women may be particularly vulnerable and clearly the investigation needs to ensure the reasons behind why the individual has gone missing e.g. it could be as a result of domestic violence, or they may be in need of medical attention.

3.6 Race

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic.

3.7 Religion or belief

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic.

3.8 Sex

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic.

3.9 Sexual orientation

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic.

3.10 Welsh Language

Could the policy or activity have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic?

This policy should not have a negative disproportionate impact on people who share this protected characteristic.

4.0 Actions and outcomes

This section lists any actions that will need to be taken in order to address any adverse impact that has been identified. Please complete all the sections below and see the guidance information in section 6 for a more detailed explanation.

4.1 Action Plan

Impact identified: This policy should not have an adverse impact and is aimed at enhancing our investigative approach and response to missing persons and related matters

Review date: Aug 13

4.2 Outcomes

This section summarises the outcome of the policy or activity following this assessment. (Delete as appropriate and see section 6 on outcomes for a more detailed explanation).

No change to policy or activity required

No

Major change needed to the policy or activity

No

The policy or activity has been adjusted to mitigate adverse impact

No

The policy or activity continues despite potential for impact

Yes

The policy or activity has been removed due to actual or potential unlawful discrimination

No

4.3 Review

This assessment and the policy or activity will be reviewed by August 2013