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The European Child Rescue Alert

Missing Children

- What do people think about missing children?
- What attitudes do the police display to missing children?
- Do you know how many children are reported missing every year?
- Do you have problems with children in care going missing?

Assessment of risk

- How do you assess risk in relation to missing children?
- Consider missing as an indicator or symptom;
- Risk is a continuing issue, don't see it in isolation;
- How do children see the risk to themselves?
- What do you think about risk in relation to those who go missing on many occasions?

Investigating missing children

- It could be the first indication of homicide or other serious crime, so failure to investigate properly can hinder the investigation;
- In the past we did not think of missing as an investigation and that resulted in poor practice;
- Assessment of risk will assist in determining the level of the investigation;
- Ownership of the investigation gives better results;
- What is the a strategy for the investigation?

Search

- Search is an essential element in finding missing children and should be linked to investigative actions;
- Determine a search strategy that reflects the circumstances;
- Use search assets in a way that is appropriate to their benefit;
- Record search actions including what has not or cannot be searched – be honest!
- Do not overlook the basics.

Management of the return

- Past behaviour predicts future behaviour – understanding where someone went and what they did is valuable in future investigations;
- Safe and well checks and return interviews give us a better understanding of what is happening;
- In serious and repeat cases anticipate the return by making plans;
- Early interventions are desirable, leaving it later makes it much more difficult to get effective outcomes;

Understanding their mindset

- We have used the work 'streetwise' but it is not a good word and we must move on;
- The effects of grooming;
- Poor parenting and coming from a bad home usually causes different thought processes and ones that do not conform to what is thought 'normal';
- Different lifestyles result in different values.

Intelligence

- If missing is an indicator of underlying problems, information sharing and intelligence development in relation to missing children can identify criminal activity;
- This is often neglected as we do not understand what is going on;
- Information sharing between agencies is important and creates a better picture.

Use of the media

- It is a powerful tool in assisting with the recovery of missing children;
- It should be part of the investigative strategy and used appropriately;
- Different situations will benefit from different uses of the media;
- Social media means that investigators have lost control over what is released to the public and when.

AMBER Alert

- A way to focus attention on the most serious cases;
- Utilise the media and the public to help find them more quickly;
- Established in 12 European countries – in The Netherlands 77% alerts resulted in the recovery of the child;
- AMBER Alert Europe can assist counties with building alert systems and respond more effectively to cross border incidents.

Legislation

- Child Abduction Warning Notices;
- Parental Child Abduction;
- Powers to use personal data, such as mobile phones and bank accounts;
- Child protection laws;
- Search

Working with other agencies

- We used to think that the police could do everything;
- We now benefit from working with other agencies;
- Partnerships with NGOs can be very powerful and reach people that would not engage with law enforcement.

Exchange ideas?



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