



<u>Policy Title</u>	Child Rescue Alert Policy and Procedures
<u>CCMT Sponsor</u>	ACC Specialist Operations
<u>Department/Area</u>	Force Crime Management Unit
<u>Section/Sector</u>	Major Crime

1. Rationale

- 1.1 This document sets out Force policy and procedures in relation to the activation of a 'Child Rescue Alert'. This is a unique national scheme whereby police forces have a pre-agreement with broadcasters that they will interrupt programming to send out urgent information to the public to help recover a kidnapped or abducted child. The principle of alerting the public to a child kidnap, in an attempt to save the child's life, originated in the United States. The scheme in the UK is called 'Child Rescue Alert'.
- 1.2 This document is relevant to Major Crime Senior Investigating Officers, Police Enquiry Centres, Control Room operators, Crime Managers, Media staff and operational staff.
- 1.3 The terminology used is defined in the NCPE guidance "The Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons". This guidance is recognised by ACPO as good practice.

2. Intention

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2.1 The purpose of this process and associated policy is to save a child's life. The aim is to instantly galvanise the entire community to assist in the search for the child, prompted by timely media releases.

3. General Principles

3.1 All missing person enquiries must be conducted in line with the Thames Valley Police Missing Person Policy and the NCPE Guidance (see paragraph 6.2).

3.2 The Thames Valley Child Rescue Alert scheme will involve a partnership with the local media in Thames Valley and surrounding areas and will include a signed protocol between the organisations.

3.3 There are specific roles and responsibilities within this process. These include:

- Force Control Room Inspector (HBI)
- First Officer attending
- Duty Inspector / supervisor
- Duty Detective Inspector
- Major Crime Duty Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)
- Child Rescue Alert Project Manager / Co-ordinator
- Child Rescue Alert Press Officer
- PEC Call Handlers
- Motorway Control Room Supervisor
- LPA Commander or duty PACE and Critical Incident Superintendent
- Chief Officers

Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for details, or [Appendix E](#) when launching on behalf of another force.

Criteria for issuing an Alert

- 3.4 There are strict criteria which must be met before issuing an alert. The national guidelines for launching a Child Rescue Alert are as follows:
- The child is under 18 years old, **and**
 - There is a reasonable belief that the child has been kidnapped or abducted, **and**
 - There is a reasonable belief that the child is in imminent danger of serious harm or death, **and**
 - There is sufficient information available to enable the public to assist Police in locating the child.
- 3.5 In all cases that may be appropriate for Child Rescue Alert, time is of the greatest importance, and the Force HBI must be alerted without delay.
- 3.6 If the Force HBI believes that the criteria for a Child Rescue Alert may be satisfied he / she will, without delay, notify the duty Major Crime SIO who will be responsible for any decision to authorise the launching of a Child Rescue Alert.
- 3.7 When presented with a case the duty Major Crime SIO has three options:
- Authorise a launch.
 - Decline to launch.
 - Ask for further clarification work to inform the decision.
- 3.8 In all cases, it is crucial that the duty Major Crime SIO records the decision in his / her policy book and explains in detail the reason for that decision (See [Guidance Procedures and Police Tactics](#) paragraph 5 for more details).

4. Challenges & Representations

- 4.1 Any person affected by this policy may make representations in relation to this document, and / or any decision in consequence of it to:

Detective Chief Superintendent Crime Support
Thames Valley Police Headquarters
Kidlington
Oxon
OX5 2NX

- 4.2 A complaint against any member of Thames Valley Police should be progressed through the Complaints Procedures.
- 4.3 The areas covered by this policy are open to scrutiny by HM Inspector of Constabulary during official inspections.

5. Guidance, Procedures and Police Tactics

This section is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 section 31.1(a) – Law Enforcement.

6. Communication

- 6.1 Links to Police National Legal Database <http://legalweb/>
- 6.2 Also refer to:
- Force Policy and Procedure on Kidnap and Extortion

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- Force Policy on Missing Persons
- NCPE guidance “The Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons”.

Communications Strategy

- 6.3 The communication strategy will be written by HQ Corporate Information and will include an extensive internal media campaign to include intranet site, Weekly Orders, Thames View, all user e-mail, Area news bulletins / magazines and posters.
- 6.4 There will also be an external communications strategy with agreed protocols.

7. Compliance and Certification

7.1 Human Rights Certification

(i) Legal Basis

The basis for writing this policy is derived from the NCPE guidance “The Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons”.

The relevant statutes in relation to Missing Persons and Abductions are:*

- Police Act 1996 schedule 4
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Section 17(1)(e)
- Mental Health Act 1959
- Child Abduction Act 1984
- Common Law Kidnap

- Children Act 1989
- Children and Young Persons Act 1969
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

**the above list is not exhaustive*

(ii) Human Rights Articles Engaged

This policy has been drafted and audited in accordance with the Human Rights Act and the principles underpinning it. It is acknowledged that this policy has the potential to engage the following articles:

- Article 5 Right to Liberty
- Article 8 Right to Respect for Private and Family Life
- Article 2 Right to Life

In the event that an Article of the convention is engaged, then the legitimacy for the engagement is provided within the text of the Article:

- Article 5 (1)(c) of the Convention (Right to Liberty) provides for ‘...the lawful arrest or detention of a person effected.. when it is reasonably considered necessary to prevent his committing an offence or fleeing after having done so..’
- Article 5 (1)(d) ‘...the detention of a minor by lawful order for the purpose of educational supervision or his lawful detention for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority;
- Article 5 (1)(e) ‘...the lawful detention of persons for the prevention of the spreading of infectious diseases, of persons of unsound mind, alcoholics or drug addicts or vagrants;
- Article 8 Right to Respect for Private and Family Life. A public authority may interfere with the exercise of this

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right in accordance with the law and as is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of:-

- national security
 - public safety or the economic well-being of the country
 - the prevention of disorder or crime
 - the protection of health or morals
 - the protection of rights and freedom of others
- Article 2 (Right to Life)- The Police Service has a positive obligation under Article 2 which may include taking preventative operational measures to protect an individual whose life is at risk from the criminal acts of another individual.

(iii) Prohibition of Discrimination

By engaging any of the afore-mentioned Articles, there is the potential to engage Article 14 of the Convention. The enjoyment of the Rights and Freedoms set forth in the European Convention of Human Rights shall be secured without discrimination on any grounds, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

Diversity Impact Assessment

7.2 This policy will be assessed for its relevance to Race Equality.

Data Protection

7.3 Personal data processed as a result of this policy will be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. It is acknowledged that 'sensitive personal data' may be processed and this data will be protected in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Specific Information sharing protocols must be in place to ensure that all disclosure of personal information made in

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accordance with this policy is compliant with the legislation.

Freedom of Information Act

7.4 This policy will be publicly available except for Section 5 and appendices A, B and C, which contain details of police tactics (Exemption 31.1(a) FOIA 2000).

It may be published on the Freedom of Information Internet site with the sections listed above and all 'weblinks' to intranet removed.

Protective Markings

7.5 This policy has been assessed as being NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Health & Safety at Work

7.6 There are a number of health, safety and welfare issues connected with this policy. They include:

1. The need for risk assessments to be conducted in respect of potential risks to staff who may need to detain potentially violent offenders.
2. Risk assessments to be conducted by duty Major Crime SIOs on best protective action to take in the interest of the child, and the impact on the child's safety of launching, or not launching an Alert.
3. Major Crime SIO should also risk assess the level of media intrusion into the lives of the child's family and consider, if the circumstances allow, obtaining appropriate consent from the family prior to launch.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Force Health and Safety Manual, which sets out the requirement for documented risk assessment by a competent person, when exposure to a particular hazard arising from workplace or pre-planned Policing work activity can be said to be 'reasonably foreseeable'.

8. Monitoring and Review

Links to Best Value/PPAF/Priorities/Performance Indicators

8.1 This policy has been redrafted incorporating best value principles

Review Process

8.2 The areas covered by this policy are open to scrutiny by HM Inspector of Constabulary at any time. This policy document will be reviewed annually or sooner if an operational need arises.

The review will take into account the following criteria:

- Changes in legislation
- Court rulings – Domestic, European and Human Rights
- Examples of good practice from other Forces or other organisations
- Changes in Home Office Circulars
- Developments with ACPO Policy Unit
- Representations made by individuals and relevant organisations