

# Police and NHS pilot initiative to help missing people



Police and NHS are to pilot an initiative to help missing people.

The Herbert Protocol is a process, which is advantageous to police and partners when dealing with missing person reports involving those who are diagnosed with Dementia or a Learning Disability.

During discussions between Police Scotland and Interventions in Dementia, Education, Assessment and Support (IDEAS), Dumfries and Galloway National Health Service, it was found that due to a general increase in the number of people within our community diagnosed with Dementia and Learning Disability, that working together would better assist in the response to locating them should they go missing, whilst minimising stress to family and friends during the initial stages of the investigation.

The benefits of the Herbert Protocol is that family, friends, care workers or neighbours will have access to a PDF file in either hard copy or electronic version, which when completed will provide police with all relevant information pertaining to the person of concern. This process will assist in the search due to the informant having possession of a document which contains all of the required information for a missing person report. This ultimately means that significant detail is circulated at the earliest possible point to assist those searching for the missing person. By the early sharing of this information it will allow immediate access to detailed

information and images of the missing person and ensure a more timely response from police to resource the search process.

Although this is a police and NHS led initiative, it will be promoted across the region by Third Sector Organisations, The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Galloway and Moffat Mountain Rescue Teams, The Food Train and residential care homes. The initiative went live in October 2017.

Detective Inspector Robin Ferguson at Dumfries said “this initiative again demonstrates Police Scotland’s ongoing commitment to work with key partners to safeguard those who suffer from dementia in our community. Close working and recent delivery of training from the IDEAS team to police officers in Dumfries and Galloway has increased our knowledge on the types of dementia and the behaviour that the person might display. Through effective partnership working, we will continue to review working arrangements and explore new opportunities to increase our collective approach to help keep people safe in our community.”

Jilly Polson from The IDEAS Team said “we are very pleased to collaborate with Police Scotland in launching this protocol. There are increasing numbers of people living with dementia in our communities and the protocol is a way of helping a person who may be at risk of getting lost to be found safe and provide reassurance to them and their families.”

Someone who has had first-hand experience of the benefits of the protocol said “I think the Herbert Protocol is a necessity for anyone in the situation where a loved one has gone missing. It was easy to fill in and provides all the relevant details in one place for the police. I have had experience of a situation where a family member went missing and at that time panic set in and it was difficult to think straight. I think it will be really helpful to have the Herbert Protocol to hand over to the police to help them in the search.”